

Beyond  
the  
New  
World  
Order

# GLOBAL VISIONS

Edited by Jeremy Brecher,  
John Brown Childs, and Jill Cutler

# **Global Visions**

## **Beyond the New World Order**

## **Praise for *Global Visions***

This important collection's astoundingly diverse contributors cut through both defeatism and ideological nostalgia.

—Bruce Shapiro, *The Nation*

This book accurately has its finger on the pulse of our age. It represents the frontiers of radical political thought.

—Douglas Lummis, *AMPO Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*

The diversity of viewpoints is stimulating and, because the authors speak for active movements around the world, inspiring.

—Chris Tilly, *Dollars and Sense*

A noble initiation of a much needed project.

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—Mark Ritchie, Fair Trade Campaign

Should be required reading for all North American trade unionists who wish to understand the international challenges to the labor movement.

—Stanley A. Gacek, United Food and Commercial Workers

# **Global Visions**

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**edited by Jeremy Brecher,  
John Brown Childs, and Jill Cutler**

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Boston**





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# Introduction

## Globalization-from-Below

We live in an era of globalization. In the 1990s, says Xabier Gorostiaga, Rector of the Central American University, "Humanity itself is being discovered as one world, an inseparable unity, a communal home linked to a common destiny. That destiny is the product of a technological revolution, a revolution in information, social communication and transportation and also of a growing consciousness of the threat of collective suicide for having overstepped the bounds of the planet."

We have little experience of how to live as one world. In this book, people from diverse geographical and social origins grapple with how to turn our globalizing world into a common home.

Richard Falk, professor of international law at Princeton University, notes that two very different sorts of globalization are occurring. One he calls "globalization-from-above"—also known as the "New World Order"—based on the leading states and transnational business and political elites.

But Falk identifies another, less widely recognized type of globalization—"globalization-from-below." It consists of "an array of transnational social forces animated by environmental concerns, human rights, hostility to patriarchy, and a vision of human community based on the unity of diverse cultures seeking an end to poverty, oppression, humiliation, and collective violence."

Globalization-from-below inclines not toward a New World Order but toward a "one-world community." It is "an expression of the spirit of 'democracy without frontiers', mounting a challenge to "the homogenizing tendencies of globalization-from-above." It is based in a "global civil society" which seeks "to extend ideas of moral, legal, and environmental accountability to those now acting on behalf of state, market, and media."

## Multifesto

This book might be called a manifesto for globalization-from-below, were not the very concept of a single position or perspective subsuming all others antithetical to its spirit of diversity. Perhaps it should be described as a "multifesto." Like the *Federalist Papers*, whose ideas helped shape the United States Constitution two centuries ago, it contains contributions by different authors coming from different starting points but presenting complementary perspectives tending in the same direction.

This book is designed to help initiate a dialogue which will establish globalization-from-below as a new paradigm for understanding and reshaping the world order. Its authors were selected, not because they would agree about everything (they don't), but because of the contribution they could make to developing that dialogue. Most of them are both scholars experienced in research and writing and activists with close ties to social movements.

Who should participate in discussing the future world order? Unfortunately, much of the debate in academic and policy circles seems to assume that the world's centers of wealth and power constitute a privileged "core" position from which to view the globe, and that only this small part of the world need be included in the dialogue about the world's future. This book presents a wide range of voices, many of them rarely heard in that debate, speaking not only of their local contexts, but of the global situation. They do so in a range of styles, from the academic to the vernacular and from the visionary to the concrete.

This book grows out of a symposium published in *Z Magazine* in which authors were asked to respond to an essay by Jeremy Brecher. For this book, scholars and activists from all over the world were invited either to respond to the original symposium or to contribute an article relevant to the theme "New World Order vs. One-World Community." The result is a book with 32 contributors from more than 20 countries on five continents and a few islands.

This book is divided into three parts: "Part I: New World Order vs. One-World Community: The Forum" debates the proposals for a global alternative presented in the lead essay, "The Hierarchs' 'New World Order'—And Ours" by Jeremy Brecher. "Part II: Globalization-from-Above: Critiques" examines the effort to perpetuate domination by internationalizing it. "Part III: Globalization-from-Below: Alternatives" addresses the problems and possibilities of a one-world community.

## **Globalization-from-Above**

Globalization-from-above extracts resources from the natural world and from local communities in order to increase the wealth and power of the wealthy and powerful. It concentrates that wealth and power in organizations which use their control of people and resources to expand their domination and to fight each other. It transfers power and resources from the natural world to human domination, from communities to elites, and from local societies to national and transnational power centers.

Western media and politicians have purveyed a fairy-tale version of this process. The forces of capitalism and democracy defeated the "evil empire" of communism and oppression. Now the victors are supporting a worldwide outbreak of democracy and economic freedom, with the United States and other world powers preserving world order through the UN, while the free market brings peace and prosperity to all the world's people. The reality, according to Falk, is "the world as an homogenizing supermarket for those with the purchasing power" while those without it are "excluded and, to the extent required, suppressed by police, paramilitary, and military means."

Globalization-from-above is destroying communities and environments. Over the past two decades, as Indian author and journalist Vandana Shiva writes, there has emerged a recognition that our major environmental threats are caused "by globally powerful institutions like multinational corporations and multilateral development banks like the World Bank, which reach every city, village, field, and forest through their worldwide operations."

Haunani-Kay Trask, Director of Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and a member of the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific Movement, describes the natural and human devastation caused by globalization-from-above in Hawaii and the Pacific: "Extreme U.S. militarization of our islands and increasing nuclearization of the Pacific Basin; exploitation of ocean resources (including toxic dumping) by Japan, Taiwan, Korea, the United States and others; commodification of island cultures by mass-based corporate tourism; economic penetration and land takeovers by Japanese and other Asian money; and forced emigration of indigenous islanders from their nuclearized homelands." The late Petra Kelly, founder of the German Greens, notes that even in Siberia, the "last untouched region of the world," there are "Japanese, German, U.S., and Korean companies" which are "exploiting every bit



of it, burning down the last Siberian forest." The people there have no say-so; "all they know is that the companies destroy everything, and they have nothing from it—just poverty."

Globalization-from-above proceeds under the banner of a free-market economic liberalism which promises economic prosperity but which has delivered worldwide impoverishment and a growing polarization between rich and poor. As Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, head of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), Mexico's largest opposition party, writes, it has become evident that "if one relies only on the effects of market forces, social contrasts become deeper and the gaps in the development of the economies become wider."

The failure of the free-market panacea is not limited to the Third World. Francis M. Deng, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, former Sudanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and the UN Secretary-General's representative on the problem of displaced persons, observes that in what was the socialist Second World "economic liberalization and the introduction of market economies," initially hailed as reflecting "the victory of capitalism over communism or socialism, seems, at least in the initial phases, not to bring the instant prosperity which the peoples of these nations clearly aspired to and expected." Quite the contrary, "Both productivity and equitable distribution, ever, of essential commodities, have been severely curtailed, resulting in humanitarian disasters." And even the "First World," notes Saskia Sassen, author and professor of urban planning at Columbia University, is seeing "the decline in earnings among the lower third or even bottom half of the earnings distribution in most major developed economies," including Japan, and "the expulsion of growing numbers from the 'mainstream economy'"—i.e. the rise of "permanent unemployment."

Globalization-from-above is leading to equally radical polarization between different regions—what Gorostiaga calls "an avalanche of North against South." In the new international division of labor, as Cárdenas notes, Third World countries are assigned the role of "providers of labor and raw materials, captive markets to complement those of the industrialized countries, suppliers of agricultural products that require mild climates and of new zones for the expansion of First World tourism. They are also replacing the North as the site for production that threatens the environment and for disposing of toxic wastes." Never before in history, according to Gorostiaga, not even in colonial times, has such an extreme bipolarization of the world existed.

One result, according to Primitivo Rodriguez, Director of the Mexico-U.S. Border Program of the American Friends Service Committee, is massive migration from poor to rich countries. "Millions of displaced people and coerced immigrants have become a cheap and flexible labor reserve both within industrialized nations and in the 'borderlands' that divide the North and the South."

Globalization-from-above has marched under the banner of democratization, but hardly of a democratization that empowers people to control the real conditions of their lives. Hassan A. Sunmonu, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, notes that "Currently the world is talking about democracy," but "nobody is talking about its component of social and economic justice" because "the democracy the rightwing is trying to fashion" is "government of the rich, by the rich, on behalf of the people."

The actual result of such a fraudulent democratization is often repression. Cárdenas notes that impoverishment breeds social discontent, but often "there is no political will to really solve the problems" that generate the discontent. So instead there follows "the hardening of political regimes and the systematic cancellation, through the use of force and repression, of citizen and human rights."

The repression and impoverishment spawned by globalization-from-above have provoked religious and nationalist fundamentalisms, what Peter Waterman of the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague calls "an authoritarian populist communal response" to "both capitalist and communist modernization projects." The result is fertile soil for what author John Feffer describes as a worldview which "defines citizenship by blood, soil, language, religion, or some combination of these elements."

Globalization-from-above is eroding the power of national governments to control their own societies. According to Gay W. Seidman, professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and international editor of the *South African Labour Bulletin*, "Increased mobility of capital and new patterns of international investment have eroded nation-states' control over economic growth.... Even in historically industrialized areas, social services and corporate taxes have been cut in the effort to retain investments.... Even historically powerful nations find themselves competing with other nations, hoping to attract investments and jobs by offering companies a more attractive deal."

The increasing global concentration of wealth is matched by a parallel concentration of power. As Vandana Shiva notes, the Group of Seven (the "G-7" or "Rich Men's Club" of the world's richest countries) "dictate global affairs, but they remain narrow, local, and parochial" in the interests that guide them. The World Bank, for example, is not really a bank that serves the interest of all the world's communities: "It is a bank where decisions are based on voting weighted by the economic and political power of donors."

Proposals for a New World Order are often actually efforts to institutionalize and legitimate globalization-from-above through the United Nations. Guinean political scientist Siba Grovogui notes that "many Western policymakers have called for a reactivation of the UN in a manner that increases the policing role of the Security Council." They use images of "international cooperation, peace, and stability," but in practice, the New World Order they describe is one "dominated by the West, in which the Security Council, and the UN in general, lends legitimacy to Western interests and hegemony." Meanwhile, war and turmoil continue throughout much of what Francis Deng has dubbed "The New World Dis-Order."

The global concentration of wealth and power has not led to domination by a single country. Indeed, an important feature of the present conjuncture, according to Juan Palacios of the Center for Pacific Studies at the University of Guadalajara, is "the evident decline of U.S. hegemony, and thus the absence of a single, undisputed hegemon." Indeed, Palacios argues that today "it seems virtually impossible for any nation to become such a hegemon."

The consequence is what Gorostiaga calls "a new divvying up of world 'spheres of influence.'" Its origin, according to Palacios, is the deepening trend toward global stagnation that began in the early 1970s, which is giving rise to "an exacerbated economic competition among both nations and multinational corporations as investment opportunities have narrowed" and profit rates have concomitantly slumped. World commercial exchange in this era has increasingly turned into "adversarial trade," carried out not between nations but between regions, "as the nation-state is being undermined by the power of the multistate conglomerates that characterize this new economic order."

Palacios notes an emerging contradiction between "the formation of regional blocs" and "the transnationalization of productive operations across national, regional, or even continental borders." What seems to be emerging is a world of "regional multistate clusters" cut across by "an

increasingly globalized network of shared production among nations" that will correspond to "a highly hierarchical international division of labor."

## Globalization-from-Below

Globalization-from-below, in contrast to globalization-from-above, aims to restore to communities the power to nurture their environments; to enhance the access of ordinary people to the resources they need; to democratize local, national, and transnational political institutions; and to impose pacification on conflicting power centers.

During the 1980s, according to Falk, transnational activism by the environmental, human rights, and women's movements became "prominent for the first time in history." Amnesty International and Greenpeace were "emblematic of this transnational militancy." This "grassroots surge" featured "a shared conviction that upholding human rights and building political democracy" provide the common underpinning for desirable transnational change.

Gorostiaga similarly observes that "International social subjects are sending out calls in different forms, in all parts of the world, through political, religious, union, and NGO [nongovernmental organization] forums and, for the first time, they have begun to link up internationally." He lists such examples as the Japan-Asian People's Plan 21, which brings together hundreds of Pacific organizations; the Third World Network; and the Forum for People's Economics.

Of course there have been internationalisms in the past, but Peter Waterman points out that the former type was largely a "nationalist internationalism," in the sense of "attempting to win nation-states for peoples without them, and rights within them for workers without such." "The old proletarian and socialist internationalism, demanding or seeking a simplified unity," has been largely surpassed and replaced by "the pluralistic internationalisms of the new social subjects and movements"—movements that "recognize a democratic diversity as a source of strength." These movements have shifted attention from "national" problems to "global" ones "for which there are clearly no adequate national (or even *international*) answers." Waterman suggests that these "new internationalisms" be referred to in terms of "an uneven, diverse, and rich movement for global solidarity."

This new transnational linking is supported by a new communications technology, according to Nancy Stefanik, an electronic advo-

cacy specialist who led the design of GLOBALink and other computer networks serving the international tobacco control movement. She points out that "a large number of initiatives involving a variety of technologies...are under way" and that "the technologies that support the globalizing of the economy are also facilitating political and social action that transcends national borders." The result is the "development of networks that empower citizen activists around the world and facilitate the formation of virtual communities that transcend traditional barriers to understanding."

Denis MacShane of the International Metalworkers Federation notes that, for the labor movement, "Global production requires global worker solidarity at the workplace level." Consequently, transnational electronic networking is becoming common in the labor movement. "E-Mail, fax, cheap travel" open up "immense liberating possibilities" because "it is now possible for the power game to be transferred from the hotel rooms where ideologues of the world met to workplace-based linkages confronting international capital."

Grassroots organizing has become pervasive throughout the world. Muto Ichiyo of the Pacific-Asian Resource Center in Tokyo observes that in the Asian-Pacific region, "Everywhere we see the patient, dedicated efforts to promote empowerment—of community people, ethnic groups, women, labor groups, urban slum dwellers, people organizing themselves against 'development' imposed from above, or asserting their independence and autonomy." The major popular political explosions seen in China, Korea, Malaysia, and many other countries in recent years "are in most cases prepared in these small-scale accumulated efforts of empowerment and 'conscientization.'"

Muto acknowledges that "The people are divided into a multitude of groups with their respective identities: gender, ethnic, religious, geographical, cultural, class, nation-state." But today, "these groups are being forced to live together under conditions imposed upon them" by a "state-supported global capitalism" which is organizing them into "a system of international and hierarchical division of labor." Popular struggle "begins on this terrain, in this divisive structure." It is "rooted in each group's identity," and "asserts the group's dignity as well as its immediate interests." But experience shows that interaction with other movements transforms a movement, helping it overcome "narrowness and oppressive practices inside it." In the process of transborder political action, people's groups and organizations gradually form themselves into transborder coalitions which produce an autonomy-based collabo-

ration "cutting across the state barriers" and perhaps ultimately "replacing the interstate system."

Such transborder collaboration is occurring even among groups often presumed to be profound enemies. For example, Palestinian scholar Nahla Abdo, currently of Carleton University in Ottawa, describes the role the women of the *intifada* have played in "politicizing the Israeli women's movement" and "generating not only sympathy but also solidarity and support among various feminist groups internationally"—demonstrated by the formation of a number of Jewish organizations such as "Women in Black" and "Women Against Occupation" in Israel, Europe, and various North American cities.

## Democratization

A central goal of globalization-from-below is democratization at every level from the local to the global. Evelina Dagnino, professor of political science at the University of Campinas in Brazil, notes that "the reestablishment of democratic regimes has been a widespread phenomenon in the past few years, sweeping the so-called 'Second' and 'Third' Worlds." But she adds that social movements are creating an alternative definition of democracy based on "the necessary enlargement of...democracy to include social and cultural practices" rather than just the state.

The result is a new conception of citizenship. "The struggles of the urban poor for housing, health, or education; of rural workers for land; of ecological groups for environmental protection; of women, homosexuals, and blacks for equal rights points in a single direction: the elimination of inequality in all its different forms and the building of a truly democratic society." It also implies "the right to be different and the idea that difference shall not constitute a basis for inequality." This notion of citizenship constitutes "an elastic system of reference able to encompass different expressions and dimensions of inequality: economic, social, political, and cultural."

Economic rights are central to this expanded concept of democracy. Gay Seidman describes how the powerful new industrial unions that have emerged in newly industrialized countries like Brazil, Korea, and South Africa have expressed a vision of democratization that included not only the right to vote but also "some kind of redistribution of resources and wealth." In countries that had "experienced authoritarian rule, popular movements tend to include not only political rights and civil liberties, but also socio-economic rights, as goals of the transition to

democracy. For them, 'democratization' implies more than simply giving people the right to vote every few years; it includes an understanding that citizens are entitled to demand a living wage, a reasonable standard of living, and basic social services like education, health, and housing."

But this drive for democratization comes up against a maldistribution of power which is not only local and national but also transnational. For as Muto points out, "Most of the major decisions which affect the lives of millions of people are made outside their countries, without their knowledge, much less their consent." They are made "in the core countries, by their governments, by transnational corporations, or by collective agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, big power summits, or international business bodies."

Vandana Shiva draws the logical conclusion: "Democratizing of international interests is essential if genuine democracy is to exist at local and national levels." She sees an "Earth democracy," however, not as a further strengthening of existing international bureaucracies, but rather as "a lateral expansion of decisionmaking, based on the protection of local community rights where they exist and the institution of rights where they have been eroded." Local environmental rights, for example, would include "the right to information and the right to prior consent: any activity with potential impact on the local environment should require the consent of the local people."

Muto describes such an approach as "a new concept of political right and political action," which he calls "transborder participatory democracy." It asserts a universal "right of the people to intervene in, to modify, to regulate, and ultimately to control any decisions that affect them," no matter where those decisions are made. Transborder participatory democracy offers an answer to "the particular formation that oppressive power has taken in our time: the state-supported globalization of capital."

Transborder participatory democracy according to Muto describes "a world order clearly distinct from the conventional idea of world government or world federation, which presupposes states as the constituent units." It is based on "a new principle, by which not the state, but the people themselves can emerge as the chief actors in determining the course of world politics and economics."

## **New Constitutive Orders**

In place of the current concentration of power in dominant states and transnational corporations, globalization-from-below implies a re-

to principles agreed upon internationally" like the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Indeed, such a multilevel system would provide a more legitimate basis for intervention by the world community when governments fail to meet basic responsibilities to protect human rights, preserve the environment, and resolve disputes without violence.

While such a multilevel conception is surely different from the system of territorial states asserting total sovereignty and independence—the so-called "Westphalian Model" which has dominated international relations since the "Peace of Westphalia" in 1648—it does not necessarily imply the elimination of national identities. As Ben E. Aigbokhan, Senior Lecturer in Economics at Edo State University, Nigeria, and member of the African Peace Research Movement, writes, "Retaining national identities may not pose a serious barrier to a new world order conducive to peaceful coexistence with sustainable growth and development, so long as there are inter-boundary interests strong enough to make parties see themselves as having common interests to protect and promote."

A radical democratization may, however, require the empowerment of a far wider range of groups than those now recognized as nations. Sociologist Elise Boulding, secretary general of the International Peace Research Association and former international chairperson of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, sees a crucial role being played by what she calls "identity groups"—"all groups that have some sense of common history and common fate, recognizing that the common history may be at least in part mythical." She notes that "supposedly extinct ethnicities are reappearing at a rapid rate, and new ones are created as migrant streams from the Third World settle in First World societies and create new hybrid cultural identities." Such identity groups are storehouses of social and environmental "problem-solving skills." The resurgence of such identity groups may, in fact, be a response to "the failure of the modern nation-state to meet the needs of its diverse populations."

"A viable political future for the 21st century," according to Boulding, "may depend on a new constitutive order substantially modifying the present nation-state system, one that permits much wider participation of identity groups in shaping the politics of which they are a part." This means "shifting the locus of authority downward to regional and local units."

Elaine Bernard, a Canadian union activist who currently heads the Harvard University Trade Union Program, describes one country where



the creation of such a "new constitutive order" may be on the agenda. The current constitutional crisis in Canada, she argues, "holds out the opportunity to restructure the Canadian state, not according to the dictates of business, but rather to meet the democratic and national aspirations of the population as a whole. With Quebecois demanding their right to self-determination, and a majority of Canadians now supporting indigenous peoples' right to self-government, Canadians have an opportunity to construct a new federal structure that assures self-government for national groupings."

Many cultural groups are divided among several nation-states. Jack Forbes, director of the Native American Studies Program of the University of California at Davis, proposes the development of "trans-state entities" which can function across national boundaries. The Inuit (Eskimo) people, for example, share a common heritage and common problems, but are divided among the United States, Russia, Canada, and Greenland. Forbes suggests that certain functions of government—such as education; Inuit-language radio and television; environmental protection; and authority over marriage, the structure of the family, the inheritance of personal property, and other matters often left to provincial authority—be turned over completely to an "Inuit governmental authority of multi-state character." Forbes suggests similar "cross-boundary sub-states" for such conflict-ridden areas of identity-group overlap as the Kurdish communities in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran and the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland. He argues that "by abandoning ideas of exclusivistic and centralized states we may be able to find ways to solve ethnic clashes without recourse to violence."

## **Grassroots Sustainable Development**

Globalization-from above has extracted wealth and productive capacity from local environments and the people who live in them; globalization-from-below aims instead to enable people at the grassroots to develop natural and human capacities which they can control and nurture. As Martin Khor, director of the Third World Network in Penang, Malaysia, and managing editor of *Third World Resurgence*, points out, when economic institutions must compete for profit in order to survive, economic growth becomes a necessity. "Much of the world's output and incomes is channelled to a small elite (mostly in the North but also in the South), while a large part of humanity (mostly in the South, but also a growing minority in the North) has insufficient means to satisfy its needs."

The same dynamic has led to "the rapid depletion and contamination of resources, pollution, proliferation of toxics, and climate change threats." Social movements have striven to counter this dynamic by helping people to "regain their right to land and other resources" and to promote "their right to good health and adequate nutrition, to safety, housing, and a sustainable environment."

From the experience and needs of such movements, according to Gay Seidman, an alternative approach to political economy is beginning to emerge, stressing "bottom-up mobilization rather than top-down investment incentives." By developing organizations in "civil society, independent of the state, popular-movement activists hope to create a source of pressure...to insist that states respond to the needs of poor and middle-class citizens." Such efforts could be supplemented by economic development strategies which use government services in such areas as housing and electrification to "provide jobs and increase domestic market size. Rather than promoting investments in new export-oriented agriculture or manufacture, governments responsive to popular movements might promote private investment in social services which would first employ workers, and then increase consumption and markets."

Such alternatives require a reconsideration of current economic dogmas. Muto Ichiyo suggests that we "begin with basics—what we need for a decent living and how those things should be produced, distributed, and consumed. Value added (GNP) should cease to be the measure for economic activities. Instead, satisfaction of human needs in a human way should be our yardstick."

Muto maintains that this is neither "an image of a subsistence economy" nor "a call to go back to pre-modern society." It envisions "a new affluence" made possible by "accumulation at the grassroots level, by people themselves." In such a system, "people-to-people relations regulate the economy, and not vice versa."

But constructive efforts to encourage grassroots economic development are greatly limited by the power of global economic institutions. Therefore, according to Martin Khor, "the fight for democracy also has to be extended to the international arena where the lack of democracy is so obvious." Such institutions as the transnational corporations, the international banks, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade should be made much more accountable to the public. "The public has the right because the public suffers the consequences if something goes wrong, whether it be the Bhopal residents dying from chemical poisoning, or the more than

100,000 farmers dying from pesticide poisoning annually, or the hundreds of millions of people suffering the social and economic effects of structural adjustment policies imposed by the World Bank and the IMF....Not only Southern governments but also local communities in our countries must have the opportunity to participate in the design of programs and the monitoring of effects."

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, "Lula," former metalworker and union activist, President of the Brazilian Workers Party, and runner-up in Brazil's 1989 presidential election, argues that the global concentration of power requires a transnational response because "there is no individual way out of the crisis." Every time a Latin American country tries alone to renegotiate better commercial, economic, or even cultural deals with Europe or the United States, "It's like placing a lightweight up against Mike Tyson—no matter how good he is, the odds are stacked against him and he ends up getting knocked out."

Gay Seidman indicates what some of the elements of a transnational response might be. At the governmental level, international trade agreements may prove "the only way for dependent economies to avoid constantly deteriorating prices for primary product exports, either by setting new terms of trade or by creating regional economic blocs to create semi-protected markets for fledgling industries." Social movements have already increased bargaining power vis-à-vis multinational corporations by "unions sending aid to workers on strike elsewhere"; going on strike themselves "to pressure their multinational corporate employers to recognize unions in their Third World subsidiaries"; and boycotting goods from regimes which repress labor, for example when "stevedores in several U.S. ports refused to unload South African goods during the 1980s." Organizations like Greenpeace have brought together people with common concerns from around the world in well-coordinated campaigns; the international consumer boycott of Nestlé prompted advertising restrictions on baby-food formulas; "an international grassroots anti-apartheid movement in the 1980s forced governments in the United States and Europe to impose economic sanctions on South Africa, undoubtedly speeding up the transition to democracy there. If popular mobilization were coordinated internationally, democratic states might find they gained more negotiating room: multinational corporations would find their options limited if they faced similar demands everywhere."

Elaine Bernard points out the growing cooperation among people's organizations in Canada, Mexico, and the United States in

response to proposals for a North American Free Trade Agreement. In all three countries, "workers are struggling with governments which have adopted neo-conservative business strategies of low wage competition. In order to reject the business program of competitiveness though, labor and the popular movements need to develop in its place an alternative continental agreement on fair trade and development.... This will require considerable rethinking of the role of government and sovereignty. Social charters can play an important role. Charters as statements of agreement among movements and people, not negotiated by governments, can help promote working people's rights—and not only their political and civil rights, but also their social and economic rights."

## **Conflicts and Contradictions**

Notwithstanding their evident convergence, there are undoubtedly conflicts and contradictions among the various versions of globalization-from-below.

Some concern the proper categories for analysis. Gorostiaga, for example, writes that "the increasing division of the world, between a North of few people and many resources and a South with many people and few resources, is the axis of the current crisis." While acknowledging that "the terms 'North' and 'South' simplify the world's problems," he argues that "they also allow us to underline the dominant contradiction." Peter Waterman argues, in contrast, that we are seeing an "interpenetration of the local, the national, and the international" which lets us increasingly "see the world as one complex and contradictory capitalist whole" rather than as "divided into a homogeneous West opposed to a homogeneous East, or Three Worlds, or North and South, similarly homogeneous and opposed."

There are empirical disagreements, too. How much, and in what ways, for example, has the nation-state system been altered by recent changes? Primitivo Rodriguez suggests that the rise of "borderlands" like the Mexico-U.S. frontier "signals the end of 'national' identities and announces the birth of a new 'country' whose rules and mores are still undefined, but whose workers are bound together by the reality of being citizens of the global economy," a "'nation' without borders." Denis MacShane, in contrast, maintains that "it is the formation of the nation-state that is the single biggest global political surge that can be seen under way in the post-communist, post uni-polar world."

MacShane also points out that, within the project of globalization-from-below, different goals may compete. "The four 'E's"—economy, ethnicity, equality (of gender), and ecology—are often rivals in claiming priority as much as they are allies in forging complementary coalitions." He adds that emphasis on global versus national or local contexts may conflict. "The embrace of internationalism" may at times be "a mechanism for avoiding the difficult work of securing advances" within the domestic or nation-state context.

There are also conflicts between different orientations toward organization and institutionalization. Nancy Stefanik notes the rise of networks that "empower citizen activists around the world and facilitate the formation of virtual communities that transcend traditional barriers to understanding." She suggests that this constitutes a "revolution of consciousness," revealing "universal values of simplicity and cooperation, respect for Mother Earth, and concern for generations to come." But MacShane warns that "a constant appeal to a networking, friction-free, millenaristic post-political global community" carries dangers of "clean hands but little enduring presence or power."

## A Convergence of Goals?

Despite these and other differences, globalization-from-below represents an unexpected convergence of goals among many people the world over. As Primitivo Rodriguez writes, "the globalization of capital, production, and communications has created the conditions in which the peoples of the world can come together across borders and barriers." This provides an opportunity for the convergence of "world visions—cultural experiences and long-held aspirations"—which can lead to "a profound re-evaluation or revolution in our ways of thinking of and relating to ourselves and the universe around us." Here, says Native American writer and curator Lynne Williamson, is the challenge for all of us: "a New World Order which derives from, depends on, revitalizes, and celebrates our separate and different traditions....*This* will be the 'new world' to discover during the next 500 years."

Muto suggests that we can partly see a "new paradigm" emerging out of the people's movements themselves. "There is a striking concurrence of views among those new movements of different origins," including movements that started in the West and the Third World. The worldwide movement for human rights, for example, largely reflects the perspective articulated by Fang Lizhi, the physicist who helped inspire

the Chinese democracy movement of 1989, that "human rights are not the property of a particular race or nationality. Every human being is born with the right to live, to find a mate, to speak and think freely. These are fundamental freedoms, and everyone on the face of the earth should have them, regardless of what country he or she lives in."

Cárdenas articulates a similar sense of "ideals without boundaries" shared by "women and men of good faith in every nation, in every continent." They imply "a world of equals, without exploiters and exploited...no one above the others....No one stepped upon or humiliated....No individual or nation constituted as an arbiter of the rest."

The convergence among the various expressions of globalization-from-below is not an accident. It results from the great historical reality that humanity is discovering itself as one world with a common destiny, and simultaneously discovering itself heading toward collective suicide by overstepping the bounds of the planet. Dokun Oyeshola, professor of International Relations at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, notes that the relationship to nature currently embodied in "development" and "civilization" has polluted water and air, destroyed natural habitats, eroded the soil, and raised global temperatures. He concludes that "our redemption must bring back balance, harmony, and beauty to what has been destroyed in the world—interpersonal, racial, national, and international relationships." He urges us to think of ourselves as "gardeners, caretakers, mothers and fathers, stewards, trustees, priests, co-creators, and friends of a world that, while giving us life and sustenance, also depends increasingly on us in order to continue, both for itself and for us."

## Resources

For information on how to participate in an international on-line computer conference continuing the dialogue in this book, contact:

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## **Part I**

### **New World Order vs. One-World Community: The Forum**

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# **The Hierarchs' New World Order—and Ours**

*Jeremy Brecher*

The world surely could use a new order—one that would correspond to the needs of people and planet. That's hardly the "New World Order" dreamed of by superpower leaders, nor the "Old World Order" that preceded it. But what then might it be?

We live in a world where oil spills, satellite news broadcasts, and fleeing refugees stream across national borders, a world in which an entire factory may be nothing but one work station on a global assembly line. The purpose of this book is to stimulate transnational discussion of what kind of world order would meet human and environmental needs, and how such an order might be realized, in a world whose features are no longer cut to the measure of the nation-state.

## **The "Old World Order"**

The Old World Order which characterized the decades following World War II had as its basis the model of sovereign nation-states developed in early modern Europe. Humanity was assumed to be divided into distinct peoples. Each people was entitled to form a nation which in turn was entitled to a monopoly of political authority within a given territory, governing all who lived there and determining the use of natural and human products. Each such nation was assumed to have or to be acquiring clear boundaries and political, economic, military, and cultural institutions permitting relatively independent, self-directed functioning.

This system was based on illusions. The human population was not divided into distinct non-overlapping groups, but rather was composed of peoples who had been mixing for millennia and who owed loyalties to multiple religious, political, ethnic, economic, kin, and other groupings. The result has been continuing conflict.

Furthermore, natural and social forces did not form closed systems where actions taken in one nation had little impact on others. Nations were subject to natural, market, ideological, and other transnational forces; weaker nations were subject to pressure from stronger ones; and nations were often caught up in the unintended effects of transnational interaction processes like arms races and wars.

Nonetheless, the nation-state system was reinforced during the 19th and most of the 20th centuries as the boundaries of social institutions came increasingly to coincide with those of nations, bringing reality closer to nationalist doctrine. After the decline of European colonialism, the entire world was organized on the nation-state model.

The Old World Order superimposed three supranational structures over this national structure in the years following World War II. The Cold War defined two relatively stable blocs in political, military, economic, and cultural confrontation. The division between industrialized and formerly colonized nations defined an economically developed First and an underdeveloped Third World. The United Nations provided a weak forum through which international cooperation could be managed when dominant nations wished it.

This Old World Order was marked by tremendous concentrations of power. United States economic, political, and military power predominated everywhere except in the communist "Second World"; the United States consumed the lion's share of global resources. The United Nations, the one institution that might have represented common global interests, was a creature of nation-states and was usually immobilized in the face of their conflicts. Measures embodying the interests of the great majority of the world's people—for example, disarmament and environmental protection—had little chance in this order if they conflicted with powerful national or other special interests.

## **The Old Order Passeth**

The end of Cold-War bipolarism, a result of the breakup of the Second World and the declining economic power of the United States, has been widely noted. Less noted—but of greater long-run significance—is the erosion of the nation-state system itself.

The 1970s and 1980s saw not the emergence of a new hegemon to replace the United States, but rather a multifaceted globalization and fragmentation of power. U.S. economic institutions hemorrhaged into a global economy of transnational corporations, world markets, and an integrated "global factory." Huge industrial complexes oriented toward

national markets were replaced by small, easily relocated facilities scattered through a variety of countries and producing for a world market. While the economic center of gravity shifted away from the United States, no other power developed comparable military capacity. Satellite broadcasting made it possible for people everywhere to see events across the world more easily than those in the next town. Meanwhile, hundreds of civil wars and ethnic insurgencies fractured the unity of established nation-states throughout much of the world.

In effect, the boundaries of economic, political, military, and cultural spheres began to decouple or de-align from the borders of nations and superpower spheres of influence and from each other. This deep change underlies many of the dramatic visible changes that mark the end of the Old World Order, such as the end of the Cold War, the decline in dominance of both the United States and the former USSR, and the shift of much production from deindustrializing areas in the First World to "Newly Industrialized Countries" in formerly underdeveloped regions. The result is a world in which the boundaries of nations and of First, Second, and Third worlds have been severely eroded, while inequalities of wealth and power have increased but also dispersed through all nations and regions.

## **New Orders**

Gorbachev's "new thinking" was, in effect, an attempt to create a new world order by replacing the bipolar superpower dominance of the Cold War era with a "concert of nations" based on genuine national sovereignty. It foundered because it did not come to terms with the de-alignments that were undermining the nation-state framework itself, particularly the rise of ethnic nationalist movements within established states and the pull of the global economy and culture.

Bush's New World Order, in contrast, represented a tentative step toward a new form of transnational organization in response to the realities of de-alignment. Its intent, while obscure in Bush's speeches, was apparent in his Gulf War strategy and his international economic policy.

The Gulf War coalition pooled different kinds of power possessed by different entities. The United States provided military equipment and trained personnel. Some Arab countries provided base areas. The emirs, the Japanese, and the Germans provided cash. The Security Council, dominated by the major powers, provided legitimation for the entire effort. While the war drew on nationalist sentiment in the United States

and some other countries, its coalition model actually reflected the inability of the United States or any other single nation to function as a hegemonic power on its own.

A somewhat similar coalition of "haves" has functioned in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, where conservative policymakers backed by the United States and a few wealthy allies have forced poor countries to accept "structural adjustment plans" which open their resources to foreign corporate exploitation and turn their economies into money machines for the benefit of their rich creditors. The U.S. government tried, with ambiguous results, to mobilize a similar coalition in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations on world trade in order to break down national protection of environments, cultures, and economies and make the world safe for unregulated transnational corporate activity.

The Bush New World Order, in sum, aimed to create a consortium of powerful political regimes, corporations, and military establishments which would cooperate to preserve their access to the resources of the Earth, the products of past human activity, and the fruits of future labor. It aimed to establish for transnational corporations what conservative "law and order" provides within nations: protection for private property and its owners' rights to aggrandize themselves. Nations which attempted to resist their assigned place in the hierarchy (whether through democratic aspirations like Sandinista Nicaragua or through a desire for domination like Saddam Hussein's Iraq) would simply be starved or bombed into submission at financial, political, human, and ethical costs that the Gulf War indicated were acceptable to the coalition. The predictable consequences were repression of insurgencies and increasing concentration of wealth on a global scale.

Whether such a world order could adjust strains and conflicts among its partners over time the way the Gulf War coalition did during the Gulf War remains open to question. But its larger difficulty was its inability to solve the basic problems facing the world. It didn't address impending ecological catastrophe, the growing gap between rich and poor within and between countries, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or the denial of basic human rights in most parts of the globe. Such a New World Order could not provide security, well-being, or freedom to most of the world's people. Indeed, its goal was not to reduce the domination and exploitation of the Old World Order but, under new conditions, to perpetuate them.

## **The Limits of National Resistance**

Most of the established traditions for resisting and replacing domination accept, indeed celebrate, the nation. They envision a nation-state controlled by its own people, controlling its own resources, able to determine its own character and fate. Externally, this has meant "wars of national liberation" to resist foreign domination, ideally to be followed by a world of sovereign nations living in peace with one another. Internally, it has placed wealth and territory under the authority of the nation.

Even under the Old World Order, the nation-state model of resistance and reconstruction proved difficult to realize. Subordination to outside forces and internal ethnic conflict were more the norm than the exception for most nations. State control of economies and militarized strategies for national independence meant dictatorships more often than empowered populations.

With the de-alignment of economic, political, military, and cultural power from the nation, this model has become even less viable. Globalization of the economy has provided most nations a choice of stagnation in isolation or subordination to foreign economic power. Fragmentation has meant fratricidal conflict over just who constitutes the nation. Given the new military capacities and ability to pool repressive resources manifested by the Gulf coalition, wars of national liberation seem likely to prove an increasingly suicidal vehicle for resistance to domination.

## **An Alternative World Order**

A world order corresponding to the needs of people and planet will need to correct the flaws of the Old World Order based on the nation-state—and the flaws of a New World Order based on a transnational consortium of the rich and powerful. It will need a worldview which recognizes the transnational character of human identities and historical forces, a set of principles for ordering them, and institutional means for implementing those principles.

**Worldview:** A worldview for such an order needs to accept the premise that the social world is composed not of sovereign entities of any kind but rather of a multiplicity of interpenetrating entities with relative and overlapping boundaries. This might be compared to the paradigm of ecology, in which an ecosystem is seen not as a collection

of isolated organisms, but rather as a set of overlapping systems and subsystems.

Such an "ecological" approach starts from a conception of the individual as a member of many groups—kinship, ethnic, religious, political, etc.—whose boundaries do not generally coincide and no one of which can be regarded as sovereign over the others. Individuals possess multiple identities; group boundaries overlap.

Such an approach abandons the fictional notion of sovereign nation-states: that they can and should control their own internal affairs free from outside interference and serve as the sole representatives of their citizens' collective will. Instead, it recognizes the current reality of multiple overlapping transnational power networks. It envisions a multi-level system of regulation cutting across the boundaries of existing nation-states to control the transnational forces that actually shape today's world.

**Principles:** Within such an "ecological" paradigm it is impossible to define completely separate entities which can be treated as private property or national territory. This means that the people of the world must be seen as inheritors-in-common of the Earth and the products of past human activity as a whole. Such co-inheritance implies a right of all individuals and groups to a share of the governing of life on Earth and the benefits thereof. It also implies a responsibility of all individuals and groups to protect the rights of all co-inheritors and to preserve the earthly environment for present and future.

For people to secure their rights and fulfill their responsibilities, two conditions are necessary:

First, individuals and groups must be free to express themselves, communicate, and organize—to exercise what are now generally termed fundamental human rights. This in turn implies that no group or institution can legitimately suppress the right of others to express themselves or to organize in a particular territory or population.

Second, all people have a right to effectively participate in governing all institutions insofar as they affect common rights and responsibilities. Whereas today, in theory, corporations are responsible to their stockholders, governments to their citizens, and international organizations to their member governments, such power centers should be ultimately subject to governing by the world's people as a whole.

**Institutions:** While ultimate authority and responsibility over such powerful institutions should be held in common by all people, this whole cannot practically express itself or act directly as a whole. Where all cannot assemble and decide, individuals and groups must be able to

delegate to representatives their rights and responsibilities vis-a-vis such institutions. But if power is genuinely to remain the people's, such delegation must be temporary, limited, supervised, and revokable.

This doesn't mean a "world parliament" making every decision in the world. There are many instruments through which rights and responsibilities may be distributed for a limited time and under limited conditions, such as leases, licenses, charters, taxation, profit-sharing, easements, and regulation. These define, in effect, "bundles of rights" which may be assigned to different individuals and institutions at various levels. Protection of the ozone layer may be assigned to a global environmental protection authority; building a local road primarily affects—and therefore requires input from—builders, users, and neighbors. Only ultimate authority need remain with the people as a whole.

Such a system might take existing institutional structures as a provisional starting point, but redefine them as subject to approval by the world's people. It could accept, for example, that there currently exist states, corporations, and international organizations, most performing some kind of social function. It would insist, however, that these institutions not block the organization of self-defined groups and that they accept governing by such groups or their delegated representatives.

In sum, the basis of an Alternative World Order can be the free development of self-defined individuals and groups and their participation in the governing of all powerful social institutions.

## **From Here to There**

This kind of world order, unlike the kind dreamed of by super-power leaders, can only be shaped by the efforts of millions of people—not by the edict of one person or one nation. Indeed, it is implicit in the conjunction of two kinds of efforts that are already under way.

First is the creation and strengthening of self-defined grassroots organizations of underempowered groups and of advocates of underempowered social interests throughout the world. In many instances such self-organization requires a struggle for human rights against the power of states and other authorities to suppress or discriminate against ethnic, political, cultural, religious, class, or other groups.

Second is the establishment of influence, and eventually of control, by such organizations from all over the world over corporations, international organizations, states, and other power centers. Some recent efforts indicate that such groups can indeed be brought together to confront the institutions that affect them:

- A transnational coalition of development, human rights, and environmental organizations holds counter-meetings called the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Forum at the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They have proposed alternative policies and helped organize transnational campaigns. They helped generate the pressure that led the World Bank to modify policies encouraging the destruction of the Brazilian rain forest and to create an environmental department charged, among other responsibilities, with being responsive to the concerns of the nongovernmental environmentalist community.

- A similar coalition of environmentalist, consumer, and farm organizations has held counter-meetings at the various GATT sessions and helped organize the opposition which led to the stalling of the Uruguay Round of GATT in late 1990.

- The "Maquiladora Coalition" brings together religious, environmental, labor, Latino, and women's organizations in Mexico and the United States to pressure transnational corporations to implement a "Maquiladora Code of Conduct" which will ensure a safe environment, safe working conditions, and a fair standard of living in the Mexican border export zones.

- A growing network of citizen groups in Mexico, the United States, and Canada are demanding the abandonment or modification of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which would undermine the environment and local economies.

- A transnational coalition of unions and environmental groups organized a successful campaign to affect the worldwide labor and environmental policies of the BASF corporation.

- The campaign for a free South Africa brought together hundreds of organizations inside and outside South Africa and eventually forced the South African government to come to the bargaining table and begin dismantling apartheid.

- Campaigns for human rights have brought together groups inside and outside of many countries. The acceptance by many countries of outside observers to monitor their elections is one example of the incorporation of outside oversight within national political systems.

Democratization movements within many countries over the past few years provide a possible model for how such efforts might evolve toward a new way of governing powerful institutions. These movements generally started with the development of an opposition which brought together a wide range of excluded and oppressed groups and social interests—such as environmentalists, women, workers, and ethnic



groups. Due to pressure from the opposition, from outside forces, and from their own contradictions, ruling groups agreed to negotiations with the opposition, informally began sharing power with it, and eventually accepted—willingly or unwillingly—an institutionalization of representation of the previously excluded groups, normally through some version of parliamentary democracy.

A similar process might enable self-constituted groups to establish the right to participate in the decisionmaking not just of “their own” state, but of any power centers which affect them. Coalitions of such groups, both inside and outside particular institutions, can cooperate to put pressure on those institutions. Under certain conditions existing institutions will be forced to negotiate with these oppositions. In some cases they will have to engage in *de facto* power sharing. Eventually this may be institutionalized in formal governing systems like those described above for an Alternative World Order.

## **Implications for Action**

For social movement activists, helping construct such a world order generally means not abandoning current struggles but conducting them in a new perspective which encourages transnational linkage of movements. Here are some guidelines:

- Support the right of all people worldwide to organize and define themselves without interference from the authorities. Fight the complicity of your own government in such interference.
- Create and strengthen self-defining grassroots organizations of the disempowered and of advocates of underrepresented social interests.
- Define the goals of such groups in ways that are congruent with the common interests of people and planet.
- Address problems and solutions globally. Make proposals not just for a national energy policy but for a transnational energy regime based on integrating the needs of the global environment with those of people in regions with different energy needs and resources. Seek input from people's groups in other lands.
- Reach out for coalitions with others around the globe. Pursue transnational grassroots mutual aid and solidarity.
- Use such coalitions to pressure institutions to conform to the needs of people and planet. Demand that GATT stop devastating local markets and start ensuring the protection of labor rights and the environment. Demand that the UN Security Council stop authorizing massive

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# **Capitalist Rivalry and People's Participation**

*Stephen R. Shalom*

Jeremy Brecher says that the U.S. government wants to make the world safe for transnational corporate activity, and by this he apparently means any transnational corporate activity, whether U.S.-based or not. However, the governments of the capitalist countries today continue to represent the interests of their own corporations, just as they have always done. Yes, the U.S. government now has to be concerned about such things as a Japanese firm located in Tennessee since it provides employment, but this doesn't mean policymakers in Washington and Tokyo have identical interests. The U.S. government, for example, still cares less than nil about the well-being of a Japanese firm that may be investing in France.

That governments serve their own corporations is not just a matter of nationalist false consciousness, but a result of the links between corporate power and political office. In the United States, for example, U.S. corporations are major campaign donors, and the corporate elite substantially overlaps with the political elite. On the other hand, foreign firms generally do not bankroll U.S. elections, and U.S. government officials are not recruited from key leaders of foreign corporations.

Information and capital flow readily across national boundaries, and firms pick up and move plants to tap different labor markets, but corporations are far less inclined to move their headquarters to other countries. Top U.S. corporate executives see themselves as American, and they aren't interested in permanently relocating to Paris, let alone Seoul.

This doesn't mean capitalist states don't have some common interests and won't cooperate to serve these interests. They do have a common interest in maintaining a world in which capitalism thrives, though at the same time they are vicious competitors. And this has long been the case. The great powers of the past often cooperated to tame some recalcitrant people (for example, the crushing of the Boxer Rebellion in China), but this did not prevent these same powers from engaging in the fiercest competition, including brutal wars.

Brecher sees the recent Gulf coalition as representing some sort of transnational identity of interests. In my view, the rush to war was precisely a U.S. effort to reassert its dominant position over its capitalist rivals. Other countries may be able to make better cars or VCRs, but war brings out the U.S. comparative advantage, namely, military strength and military technology. Victory brought with it a privileged position for the United States in the Gulf vis-à-vis its competitors: the United States will be the one to get those construction contracts, the arms deals, and the right to maintain a military presence in the region. Indeed, according to Lawrence Kolb, a former Reagan-era Pentagon official, the United States has even been overcharging its allies for the costs of the war and then threatening them if they fail to pay up.

Washington's most important prize in the Gulf War was the ability to affect oil pricing decisions through Saudi Arabia. Some have suggested that Bush went to war in order to keep the price of oil low, a goal shared by all the industrialized capitalist nations. But this has not been the U.S. goal. When Saddam Hussein told U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie just before his troops marched into Kuwait, "Twenty-five dollars a barrel is not a high price," she replied, "We have many Americans who would like to see the price go above \$25 because they come from oil-producing states."<sup>1</sup> Glaspie didn't have to mention that George Bush was one of those Americans, and had gone on a mission to Saudi Arabia in 1986 precisely to get the price of oil raised. As business correspondent Louis Uchitelle commented in *The New York Times*,<sup>2</sup> "By virtue of its military victory, the United States is likely to have more influence in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries than any industrial nation has ever exercised." If prices were to drop, Uchitelle noted, "Washington might lean on a reluctant Saudi Arabia to cut production and push prices back up...." While Japan, Germany, and other industrialized nations favor low energy prices, the United States wants the price high enough to maintain profits for its domestic petroleum companies—and high enough to help Washington's competitive position vis-à-vis its economic rivals.

Capitalist rivalry showed itself in many other ways as well. In January 1992, Bush accused West Europeans of hiding behind an "Iron Curtain of protectionism," using language previously reserved for our mortal enemies. "We won the Cold War and we will win the competitive wars," Bush declared.<sup>3</sup> In March, the Pentagon prepared a draft policy statement asserting that the U.S. mission will be to prevent friendly or unfriendly nations from competing with the United States for superpower status. *The New York Times* reported that senior White House officials repudiated the document, calling it a "dumb report" that "in no way or

shape represents U.S. policy."<sup>4</sup> In fact, however, the report essentially echoed public statements already enunciated by administration officials even before the Gulf War. Sharp cuts in military spending, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney warned the National Newspaper Association in March 1990, "would give us the defense budget for a second-class power, the budget of an America in decline.... There's a point below which we cannot go if we want to remain a superpower." And the commandant of the Marine Corps declared that since the interests of the United States and its allies could be expected to diverge, we had greater need "for forces capable of responding unilaterally."

While capitalist states will no doubt continue to cooperate in pursuit of their common interests, there would seem little reason to expect less intra-capitalist competition than before. The nation-state is far from dead.

## **Democracy and Diversity in an Alternative World Order**

Trying to imagine the basic principles of an alternative world order is an important and long overdue task, and I welcome Brecher's taking the initiative in this regard. His principles, however, need to be clarified or refined if we are to avoid some rather undesirable consequences.

Everyone, says Brecher, has the right to participate in governing all institutions insofar as the institutions affect common rights and responsibilities. Direct participation, Brecher acknowledges, would be impractical, and he suggests a system of representation under which representatives have only limited and temporary authority and are recallable. Even such a world parliament could not possibly deal with every decision that would have to be made in the world, so Brecher proposes a variety of instruments through which rights and responsibilities might be distributed. But these instruments are merely mechanisms for assigning authority from the center; there is no real decentralization of power. So he has licenses and charters operating on a local level, but the only *democratic* decisionmaking body that Brecher's model seems to include is the one-world body. This seems to me dangerous for two reasons. First, because the principle that everyone should decide everything is not just impractical, but inappropriate, and, second, because decentralization has certain important virtues in its own right.

The key principle of socialist democracy, on an international scale as well as on smaller scales, ought to be not that everyone decides everything, but that people ought to participate in decisions in proportion to how much the decisions affect them. On one level, of course, every-

thing affects everyone and so everyone should have a say on everything; but not everything affects everyone equally. Thus, for example, whether English or Chinese is taught as the main language in my local school affects to some degree everyone on the planet, but it obviously affects local folks more than it does the residents of Beijing, so much so that the interest of Beijing residents in the matter probably approaches zero. Therefore, my neighbors and I ought to have the decisive say on the question. On the other hand, many issues dealing with the Earth's resources and environment affect all the world's people (and their progeny) to a substantial degree and in roughly equal amounts, and therefore these issues ought to be decided by everyone. (Brecher refers to this distinction when he talks about the ozone layer and the local road, but he doesn't make explicit that democratic structures are needed at every level, not a parliament on the world level and licenses and charters on the others.) How do we decide which decisions get made at which level? Sometimes there will be disagreement about just how much a decision affects different people, and, if no consensus can be reached, we ultimately will have to let the global community resolve the disagreement. But at least the general principle—participation in proportion to how much one is affected—ought to be clear.

In deciding the proper locus for decisionmaking, another consideration is involved as well. Decentralization is not simply a means of operationalizing the "participation in proportion to how much one is affected" principle. Decentralization—making decisions on lower levels—has other benefits as well. It tends to promote more participation, more individual initiative, more experimentation, and more diversity. These things are desirable in and of themselves, and to encourage them we might want to sacrifice a little of our global authority. The international community will have to protect the planet's environment and ensure minimal standards of democracy and social justice, but often the human and social benefits from decentralizing the decisionmaking for certain decisions will outweigh the costs.

Democracy and diversity: these are at least two of the values that must inform any vision of a better world.

## Notes

1. Transcript published in *The New York Times*, 23 September 1990.
2. 5 March 1991.
3. Newark *Star Ledger*, 14 January 1992, p. 1.
4. 11 March 1992.

# The Value of Diversity for Global Cooperation

*John Brown Childs*

*Exercise great patience and goodwill toward each other in your deliberations. Let the good tidings of Peace and Power and righteousness be your guide... Cultivate good feelings of friendship, love, and honor to each other always.*

—Dekanabwida, 15th century co-founder of the Native American inter-tribal "Iroquois Confederacy"<sup>d</sup>

It is to the ongoing creation of Planetary Community that I direct these remarks. To assist in the growth of this community requires grappling with the tremendous diversity of peoples holding many different outlooks, while simultaneously undoing elite-dominated, deeply rooted structures of inequality and subjugation. I believe that locally rooted, culturally grounded diversity is not intrinsically a barrier to a Planetary Community. To the contrary, locally rooted diversity can be fundamental to the growth of egalitarian cooperation rather than domineering forms of world order inequality.

The "alternative world order" that Brecher discusses is actually one of "community," rather than one of "order" with its hierarchical, elite-dominated command systems. But Brecher's "community" is at first glance different from the village, the tribe, the ethnic group, and nation which are the more usual sites to which that term is applied. This globally expansive community is premised on a worldview that, Brecher says, "recognizes the transnational character of human identities."

Can such a view, "Of the planet, By the planet, and For the planet," be anything more than a pipe dream lost in the smoke of pollution, war, and hatred? I believe a Planetary Community with its embracing worldview is both possible, necessary, and currently in development. But we must identify and address countervailing problems that erode the tendency toward this community.

Obviously the world is riddled with conflicts, infused with tremendous inequalities; at the same time it is being shaped by powerful elites that survive through brutal subjugation of whole peoples, classes, and regions. Huge economic empires of multinational corporations mold the destinies of millions of unwilling people. The subordination of women, the virulence of racism, bloody conflict, and the willingness to use the genocidal force of powerful national military machines in the interest of maintaining "geopolitical" domination are harsh realities. What chance does the thin reed of Planetary Community stand in these powerful currents?

Were Planetary Community only an idea, however compassionate, I would have to say it stood no chance at all. However there are also powerful requirements for global survival that work toward the growth of such a community, and some apparent barriers to that growth are not what they seem on the mirage surface presented by the mass media.

Consider "race" and ethnicity. We hear about the very real ethnic/racial conflicts in the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, France, Belgium, Northern Ireland, the United States, and elsewhere. Indeed, there are strong indications that increasing inequalities connected to changing industrial/economic realities and fueled by hard-core racism will produce social explosions in many Western nations to rival the difficulties now being faced in the former Soviet Union. Some deride "the new tribalism" and "ethnic separatism" as the source of all social conflict. They point to intensive local identities as barriers to interaction.

But conflict is not intrinsic in terms such as "tribe," which means a group of people who share a common way of life and history. Tribes and local groups do not *per se* stand in the way of a planetary outlook. In North America alone, there are numerous historical examples of inter-tribal alliances and cooperations such as the "Great League of the Iroquois," or Haudenosaunee, founded in the 15th century; the huge pan-tribal alliance created by Tecumseh in the early 1800s to resist white expansion; and the African-American/Seminole alliance that fought some fifty years of guerrilla war against U.S. expansion in Florida in the early 1800s. Rather, it is modern industrial society, which in about 200 years has brought the planet to the brink of destruction, that has much to learn philosophically from indigenous "tribal" peoples who managed to live with, not against, other tribes and the planet for centuries. To be sure, there are also histories of tribal warfare among some peoples. But those are at most just subsets of a long, sad human history in which groups of all sorts fight one another. The most destructive wars using the most horrible scientifically developed weapons in human history have



originated in this century not among tribal peoples, but among modern "civilized" industrial nations struggling over power and territory.

The nightmares of imperialism and totalitarianism are historically carried out in the name of a uniformity that subordinates and obliterates diversity in the name of one nation's asserted superiority. Imperialism, lock-step totalitarian systems, the World Wars, and conflict in the former Yugoslavia are not caused by efforts to create "cultural diversity." To the contrary, it is monocultural uniformity, imposed from above, using the barrel of the gun and the power of "cold cash" to obliterate diversity that has wreaked major destruction and suffering in modern history.

Consequently, the growth of Planetary Community requires constant vigilance against claims of monocultural uniformity and the superiority of one nation over another. If we are to be a Planetary Community rather than a New World Order run by the United States and its "consortium" partners, we must rely in part on diversity as a resource. The resilience of local groups can be the elemental stuff from which will grow a real community that can resist the deadening hand of international uniformity used to maintain the power of the few. This said, we still are left to wrestle with the classic dilemma of how to form unity with, rather than against, the real diversity of peoples.

We are flooded with negative examples of the apparent disruptive effects of diversity every day in the media. Some examples are tragically real and must be confronted directly. But we must be very careful not to be lured into the simplistic, indiscriminate, and misleading use of the term "ethnic conflict" as the core source of all current societal tensions. It is to the advantage of powerful national elites in countries such as the United States to construct a new post-Soviet threat to world peace as one of "ethnic conflict." To the contrary, the threat comes more from aggressive European-style nationalism, with various national elites armed to the teeth by international arms merchants, including many Western ones. Of course, if such "nationalism" and the international arms trade are really the issue, then the very role of the United States and its allies would also have to be reexamined given their own nationalistic strivings and profit-oriented arms manufacturers.

The misleading shifting of the source of all crisis to "ethnic conflict" implies that in various parts of the world, two or more groups, each homogenous and culturally distinct from each other, are engaged in "primordial," "intractable," "tribalized" warfare of the most "primitive" kind precisely because they are fundamentally "different." But in many instances, conflict does not arise out of group diversity *per se*. Nor, despite the claims of some partisans, is it simply a continuation of

historical memory. Rather conflict often erupts from efforts of powerful state-supported elites and groups to obliterate multiculturalism, and to subordinate or exterminate the communities that make up heterogeneous social environments. State-sponsored terror, subordination, oppression, and genocide aimed at particular cultural communities then inevitably produces resistance. Such conflicts are more often the consequences of the damaging impact of oppressive inequality, not of ethnic plurality *per se*.

For example, in Guatemala, at least 100,000 indigenous peoples have been murdered by (U.S. supported) government forces; at least 40,000 have "disappeared," which is to say they have been murdered; 450 villages have been destroyed; and 250,000 people have been turned into refugees because of government "anti-guerrilla" campaigns aimed at the Mayan population along with labor, human-rights, and other activists. Some observers would consider this situation as "ethnic conflict" between the indigenous Mayan people and the Hispano-Eurocentric dominated government and population. But as diverse writers such as Susanne Jonas and Maurice Lemoine point out, the history of Guatemala is one in which, "the (majority) indigenous populations live under all sorts of discrimination and violence."<sup>2</sup> Socially sanctioned anti-indigenous discrimination and violence, not the presence of distinctive cultural groups, is the issue. Salvador Palamino Flores says of similar events in Peru:

Without respecting the multiplicity of cultures and the concept of multiculturalism, they want us all to be Westernized like they are. But that clashes very sharply with an Indian principle—the way of living of Indian people that is based on plurality.<sup>3</sup>

And as Lynne Williamson points out in her chapter on the situation of Native Americans in North America, written for this book:

United States government policies of extermination, economic dependence, assimilation, termination of some tribes, and now homogeneity under the guise of economic independence...are always driven by the goal of mainstreaming us until we no longer exist as separate nations or groups.<sup>4</sup>

Remove such inequality and suppression aimed at particular cultural groups; produce a democratic non-oppressive multicultural environment such as that of Switzerland; and "ethnic difference" would no longer be connected to "conflict." Let us not put the "cart of cultural distinctiveness" in front of the "nightmare horse of oppression."

Similarly, Bogdan Denitch points out that the war in Bosnia (usually called "Muslim-dominated Bosnia" in much of the U.S. media) is less

"ethnic conflict" and more an effort to impose a nationalist monocultural uniformity by evaporating a complex vital multi-ethnic cosmopolitan society. The blood-drenched term "ethnic cleansing" *does not involve an effort to create multiculturalism, but instead to destroy it*. Denitch points out that the cities have been sites of multicultural interaction and cooperation. And, it is the cities that have been targeted. He says:

Multi-ethnic Sarajevo was the major source of popular music and culture...The cities where massive intermarriage and denationalization take place, where various national groups mix and make friends, where women enter professions, where the young reject tradition—these cities are the sources of modernity. Being a citizen of Yugoslavia had meant to me being a member of a very heterogeneous community.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, the sources of the tragic situation in the former Yugoslavia today, says Denitch, are not to be found in the very "multi-ethnic" society that is now being systematically destroyed. Instead, roots of destruction entwine their constricting stranglehold around expansive multiculturalism by forcing the creation of new identities that "are so much narrower, more parochial, and less flexible."

And what pushes toward such deadly monocultural narrowness? By definition, an essentially non-oppressive multi-ethnic society does not do so since its very existence is one of pluralistic breadth rather than constriction. Rather, in the former Yugoslavia, the parochialized mono-ethnic version of the nation-state is imposing an "aggressive nationalism [that] is mainly responsible for this unnecessary death." Moreover, while certainly there are "grassroots" elements of average people who participate in pogroms, manipulative national elites are orchestrating much of this disaster in former Yugoslavia and elsewhere. Denitch says:

The political elites of the states of former Yugoslavia have wrought a massive disaster on their peoples....[They] are not alone. Throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union destructive over-ambitious bunglers, often uncritically supported by a West relieved to see the last of the communists in power, were able to get more or less popular mandates.<sup>6</sup>

We should note that opinion surveys conducted in the former Czech and Slovak Federated Republic before the break-up there showed that the majority of people opposed the split into two nations. Key nationalist elite gate-keepers succeeded in their aims by refusing to hold a referendum on the subject. The "ethnic" split took place not because of popular opinion but despite it.

I am certainly not an "expert" on the former Yugoslavia, or on Guatemala, or on various other sites of carnage and division around the

world. I stand dumbfounded and aghast at the slaughter. I make no claims to fully comprehend or to speak about the depths of human suffering in so many places; about the horrible systematic mass rapes of thousands of Bosnian women; about the brutal blasting of cities such as Sarajevo; or about the genocidal attacks on the Mayan people in Guatemala. But clearly it is not the everyday life of locally-based ethnic diversity from Sarajevo to Guatemala that is the problem. To the contrary, often it is a brutally imposed, state-sanctioned, elite-directed, *mono-ethnic uniformity* combined with purist single-culture nationalism that is the key culprit.

*Elite-directed national conflict*, rather than multi-ethnic difference, is the wellspring from which flow many tragedies. The dangerous illusion of mono-cultural and racial "purity," coupling in deadly embrace with the bloody nationalism of political elites, produces the offspring of horror.

By contrast, the most positive possibilities for Planetary Community are coming from highly distinctive cultural/occupational/local groups who are increasingly working cooperatively with one another. Many such groups have intersecting concerns about the environment, about corrosive massive poverty, about militarism and elite control, and about the still real specter of nuclear war.

Such group concerns are important for a variety of reasons. They are often grounded in tangible economic and environmental issues that operate at both local and global levels. The felt need to do something about these problems is intense. From the Veracruz Ecology Group in Mexico to "Ecology Club" activists in Poland; from Bhopal to Chernobyl; from nuclear testing sites in the former Soviet Union to the land of the Shoshone in the western United States diverse peoples face the awesome consequences of the world's elites' lust for power and money.

But local groups do not have to give up their distinctive identities in order to address these problems collectively with others at great distance from them. Rather, their strength can flow from their tangible senses of distinctive self and place. We see this powerful sense of self, place, and planetary connectedness among the Kayapo in Brazil; among aboriginal peoples of Australia; among the Inuit and Saami of the Arctic. We see the importance of local diversity in the activities of Love Canal organizers, in the coalitions of the Yakima, Umatilla, and Nez Perce Indian peoples near the Hanford nuclear weapons facility. We see it among women organizers in the Chipko "Embrace-the-Tree movement" in India; among the "Greenbelt movement" activists in Kenya; in the anti-toxic waste-dumping coalition of Chicano and African-American

which, assisted by mutual sharing of information among us, will aid in the ongoing growth of the constructive egalitarian Planetary Community.

## Notes

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# **Building an Alternative World Order**

## **What is to be Done?**

*Juan J. Palacios*

The world is nowadays at a decisive turning point, where the powers that be frenetically strive to mold a world structure that assures the preservation of their interests, largely disregarding the social and environmental consequences it might beget, in a vast offensive whose overwhelming force can only be counteracted by the actions of concerned people and organizations committed to a more humane order, one respectful of nature and life on the planet. I would like to add some reflections to the views put forward by Jeremy Brecher about such an order.

## **A Sense of History**

Before thinking about the appropriate strategies to adopt, we should attempt a more thorough characterization of the present world conjuncture, one that permits us to discern its essential features and trends, so that we are able to know better how to act on them. This requires us to place this conjuncture in historical perspective, and thus to understand it as a specific stage of capitalism's secular development. What I intend here is to make more explicit that it is the system we should struggle against, not a particular policy of a given hegemonic nation.

## **The Present World Conjuncture**

From such a perspective, it should be acknowledged that the transition to a new international order is taking place at the end of the 20th century, when the 21st is becoming an imminent reality. The rise of Japan as an economic and technological superpower, followed by other nations in East and Southeast Asia, has led to the emergence of Asia and the Pacific as the most dynamic region in the world. This phenomenon is becoming one of the determining factors in the shaping of the world

order that will prevail in the 21st century, which, significantly enough, is already referred to as the Pacific Century.

Now that the Cold War has ended and the collapse of the socialist world has culminated in the final breakdown of the Soviet Union, Japan has become the new ideological enemy for the United States and, in a way, of the West at large. The close interdependence that has developed between the United States and Japan has resulted in growing tensions that may soon result in open confrontation, as George Friedman and Meredith Lebard have argued in their book *The Next War With Japan*. This is a reality in international relations: the more interdependent two countries are, the more potential for conflict develops between them.

Another major feature of the present conjuncture is the evident decline of U.S. hegemony, and thus the absence of a single, undisputed hegemon. Even more, it seems virtually impossible for any nation to become such a hegemon in all respects, as the Gulf War demonstrated in 1991. The end of the Pax Americana is thus another reality at the end of the 20th century. In this respect, the rise of Japan as an economic superpower has led many to think of the possibility of a Pax Nipponica, at least a limited one based on Japan's position as the world's largest financial supplier, as Ezra Vogel, in his book *Japan as Number One*, anticipated as early as 1979.

The solution of the ongoing dispute over who will have an hegemonic position in the new international order will mainly depend on how U.S.-Japan relations evolve in the coming decades. In any event, Japan will be at least the number-two hegemon, a circumstance that should be taken into account for the design of a bottom-up strategy to build a new global order, if we consider that Japanese views of the world are not the same as those held by the United States; after all the two countries hold quite different conceptions of capitalism.

## **The Underlying Realities**

But beneath the apparent restructuring of power relations, what truly characterizes the present international conjuncture is what I have termed underlying realities. The most all-encompassing of these realities is the trend toward global stagnation that began to emerge in the early 1970s and is deepening in the 1990s, giving rise to an exacerbated economic competition among both nations and multinational corporations as investment opportunities have narrowed and profit rates have concomitantly slumped. As a result, world commercial exchange has increasingly turned into what Peter Drucker in his book *The New Realities*

terms adversarial trade, that is, trade in which the purpose is not to displace competitors through better and cheaper products, but simply to destroy them. In this hostile environment, Drucker argues, the only way for nations to obtain reciprocity is by grouping with other nations to form multistate economic blocs with sufficient power to face this reality.

This is the major feature of what the CIA termed, in its report entitled *Changemasters*, the new transnational, as opposed to international, economy, in which trade is no longer carried out between nations but between regions, as the nation-state is being undermined by the power of the multistate conglomerates that characterize this new economic order. The consolidation of the European Common Market and the North American Free Trade Agreement treaty are examples of this trend.

From another perspective, the formation of trading blocs, and more generally the process of global regionalization, is nothing more than a response of capital to global stagnation. Proponents hope that trade liberalization in larger regions will bring about the stimulus the world capitalist economy so needs to get out of its present slump; this is particularly the case of the European Community. At the same time, regionalization is a search for collective security before the growing uncertainties of such a stagnant, fiercely competitive global economy.

The other major response of capital to the stalemate of this epoch has been an unprecedented acceleration of the process of globalization, as is now called the expansion to a global scale of the power and operations of the large multinational corporations based in the leading industrialized countries. Globalization has resulted in one of the essential contradictions of this period of transition: that between the formation of regional blocs and the transnationalization of productive operations across national, regional, or even continental borders. Such transnationalization has entailed substantial changes in the international division of labor which, it should be stressed, constitutes the sustaining economic fabric of every world order.

All these underlying realities remind us that we live in a hostile world in which every actor is doing whatever can be done to weather the storm and preserve its own interests. What we have to bear in mind is that those interests oppose any attempt, either top-down or bottom-up, to build a world order based on an institutional system different from that in which they were originated and in which they can be reproduced.

## **Neoliberalism as the Dominant Ideology**

A powerful force that has taken shape in the last decade is the



renewed liberalism that the powers that be have imposed as the dominant ideology of the end of the 20th century. More than ever, the principles of free market, free trade, and free enterprise stand now as articles of faith; capitalism is portrayed as the natural order that must be preserved for humankind to prosper and survive. The collapse of actually existing socialism contributed to this view, appearing as proof of the unviability and undesirability of the order inspired in Marxist thought, and indicating the corresponding triumph of capitalism.

The rise of neoliberalism is part of the strategies of large capital and its representatives in advanced nations for breaking out of stagnation, and at the same time for renewing the ideological bases of the triumphant system. The problem is that neoliberal policies and development strategies are already revealing the heavy costs they imply in social and environmental terms. This is occurring both in the United States after Reagan and Bush, and in countries like Mexico and Chile, the Third World nations that most faithfully embraced neoliberal doctrine as inspiration for their development models. Poverty, malnutrition, and a brutal concentration of income and wealth are growing, notably in these two Latin American countries.

The truth is that, inasmuch as it is based on the blind logic of the market, neoliberalism is inconsistent with social, progressive redistribution, and also blind and deaf to ecological considerations. The task of shaping an alternative world order that cares for social and environmental needs will thus require a struggle against this powerful ideology and its corresponding theoretical underpinnings which, in his book *La Contrarrevolución Monetarista* (The Monetarist Counterrevolution), Mexican economist René Villarreal has termed "bastard monetarism."

## **What is to be Done?**

It may be clear from the above discussion that the transition we are going through at this point in history is not a result of the crisis of the nation state, as Jeremy Brecher argues, but a consequence mainly of the collapse of the international order forged after World War II along the path of capitalism's development. This order has now become what Chinese analyst Chen Xiaogong has characterized as a "turbulent détente, an order in which one superpower coexists with several other lesser powers all depending on and struggling against each other." What collapsed was not only the postwar structure of power in a geopolitical sense, but also the international economic and financial edifice engendered by the Bretton Woods agreements of 1944 and the institution of the welfare state, likewise created along the lines of Keynesian doctrine.

Present trends thus point to a multipolar world structure in which the balance of power will hinge on what I would call a shared hegemony. At the same time, we can anticipate a world map composed of regional multistate clusters cut across by an increasingly globalized network of shared production among nations—a structure that will correspond to a highly hierarchical international division of labor. We are therefore still far from the demise of the nation-state. It is both an institution and an actor with which we will be living in the foreseeable future; the reemergence of the ethnic groups and ancient nations that for a long time were oppressed under the Soviet empire and now claim a territory as a matter of historical identity shows how deeply rooted is the concept of the nation-state as the basis for the organization of peoples the world over.

The question is how to go about building another kind of world order, which means going against the powerful trends giving birth to today's. First of all, any initiative in that direction should have a sense of timing. To build a new world order takes decades and even centuries. What is needed, therefore, is a strategy that envisions steps to tackle immediate urgent problems, and at the same time defines the guidelines for actions to induce structural changes in the long run. This requires us to begin by taking rather modest but at the same time more solid and viable actions, instead of devising from the outset global institutions to administer a new order we still do not know how to bring about.

The actions of today's self-organized groups, grassroots and social movements, environmental organizations, and concerned communities can exert pressure for orienting or changing decisions on specific issues, but only up to the point "the powers that be" consider unthreatening to their interests. Moreover, up to now the actions of those groups have mainly dealt with the consequences and effects of capitalism. Although this is a most encouraging starting point, the task of building up an alternative world order requires us to struggle against the capitalist system itself.

One approach is to focus on issues that may result in the imposition of limits to that system, to which end environmental demands have the highest potential. In this sense, bottom-up organizations and movements have pointed to the right target. What is needed, though, is to bear in mind that unrestricted capitalist production is the single most important cause of environmental devastation, as it is guided by the logic of the market which implies a reckless disregard for ecological considerations.

Marx taught us that, in order to survive, capitalism must be in permanent expansion. More recently Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff have reminded us in the pages of *Monthly Review* that unlimited growth

in a limited environment is a contradiction in terms and ultimately "a recipe for disaster," a disaster that may occur in the next century. They add that if we care about the survival of the human species, we must listen to the ecologists and design a program that permits us to relieve "current suffering" and at the same time to initiate a process of radical reform.

A sound strategy for building up an alternative international order careful of human needs and respectful of the preservation of the natural habitat will have to combine actions to induce or change decisions on immediate issues with others geared to effect a radical reform in the system. In this latter respect, although grassroots and other social movements are multiplying all over the world and are already affecting policies and decisions, the overall strategy could be made more effective with the emergence of a new class or social stratum that the globalization of production and the advances in telecommunications can make possible. Hopefully, it would be a stratum with sufficient leverage to adopt and promote the interest of the masses who will suffer the consequences of the world-order-to-be, but cannot make their voices heard. It would be a plural, transnational class with a world vision favorable to the needs of people and planet, whose views and claims thus combine both economic and environmental demands from grassroots and other bottom-up groups. If it develops, such a class—comprised of workers in multinational corporations, backed by ecologists, intellectuals, and other concerned people—could be a more viable and effective actor and promoter than the rather vague figure Brecher calls "self-organized people."

But instead of making more predictions, I would just say finally that what is definitely imperative both for the emergence of the said hypothetical class, and ultimately for the launching of any progressive offensive to influence the conformation of an alternative world order, is the conception of a new doctrine and a new paradigm that are capable of generating a new ideology that takes up the claims and worries of the masses of individuals of the new order. Only in such a way can major advances be achieved, as these groups organize themselves and thus become a force capable of forcing capital to make things easier for the working class and the planet. In the past, marxism provided such a paradigm for workers and progressive groups. After the fall of real socialism and the corresponding crisis of marxism, a new doctrine is needed as a real and viable alternative to neoliberalism, and thus as a guide for progressive movements that strive to procure more humane living conditions and a better world for our children now and in the imminent Pacific Century.

# **Peaceful, People-Centered, and Ecologically Sensitive Development**

## **A Mechanism for Promoting a New World Order**

***Ben E. Aigbokhan***

*Everybody will understand that I recommend attacking first those expenditures whose external impact is the most harmful because they result in mounting waste beyond national borders.*

*—Michel Camdessus,  
Speech at United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1991.*

The above quotation underscores the growing globalization of the world economy. Actions or inactions in one part of the world have crucial repercussions on the other parts. The consumption pattern in one part has its effects on the other parts. And like the human body, when one part is ailing it affects the proper functioning of the others.

Arms production, in which industrialized nations seek markets in the non-industrialized world, and wood and furniture consumption, in which the former seek the necessary raw materials (timber) from the latter, are two major examples of expenditures whose external impact is harmful because of the resulting armament, wars, deforestation, and poverty in the latter.

Various forms of world order have existed in the past and have not succeeded in averting wars. Indeed they have tended to engender wars. Robert McNamara observed that in the past 45 years there have been some 125 wars and conflicts in the Third World. He went on to state that because of the diverse reasons countries have for going to war, we must conclude that in the world of the future, conflicts within and among

nations will not disappear even though the East and West cease to fight their proxy wars in the South. This "inevitability of wars" view is based on the fact that nation-states are still seen—and will continue to be seen—as distinct sovereign entities with few unifying interests cutting across their boundaries that might reduce or eliminate the "inevitability of wars." In contrast to that view, this chapter argues for an Alternative World Order based on inter-country interests sufficient to ensure peace-oriented, people-centered, and ecologically sensitive growth and development.

## **The New World Order**

Jeremy Brecher describes an Old World Order which is based on the model of sovereign nation-states, each building its own political, social, economic, and cultural institutions. That order has been characterized by the Cold War between East and West, the division of the globe into First, Second, and Third worlds, and the struggle to dominate and the fear of domination. In other words, the Old World Order lacked mutual interests strong enough to ensure permanent peaceful co-existence and thereby foster growth of the world economy.

The United Nations was created after World War II to serve as a rallying point for common global interests, but experience has shown that the body is used effectively only when the dominant nation-states wish it—when it is in their own interest. For example, the UN was not used effectively to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue or the South African apartheid issue, but was used effectively to prosecute the Gulf War against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. From this emerged what Brecher refers to as the New World Order, based on a coalition of the rich and powerful political regimes, their corporations, and their military establishments, which will cooperate to preserve their access to the resources of the Earth. The rich and powerful political regimes co-opt a few poorer and weaker ones from time to time to execute programs as and when necessary. Again, as experience has shown, these co-opted countries' benefits are often temporary and short-lived. For example, Egypt's reward for being co-opted in the Gulf War was a debt write-off. Such a benefit, however, only touches on a symptom and not a cause of developmental failure in Egypt, as in any other debt-ridden country. Moreover, Brecher has rightly argued that such a coalition seems incapable of solving the impending ecological crisis, the growing gap between the rich and poor within and between countries, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

An Alternative World Order proposed by Brecher recognizes the transnational character of human identities and historical forces, a set of principles for ordering them, and institutional means for implementing those principles. It posits a social world composed not of sovereign states but of interpenetrating entities with overlapping boundaries. To execute this Alternative World Order, a world parliament of some sort is being proposed in which everybody will participate in decisionmaking.

There is no doubt that there is a need for a new world order with common interests that transcend national boundaries. Fear of domination and fear of loss of national economic and political sovereignty have been barriers to the success of international economic or political associations. Such fears may be allayed if mass participation by disarmament and environmental movements is used to foster such transnational associations.

However, the approach as presently conceived may face some operational difficulties, for at least three reasons. First, the idea of doing away with national identity may be difficult for people to accept. Even within countries, people still like to maintain their ethnic and cultural ties. This does not prevent inter-ethnic interests binding them together. Similarly, retaining national identities may not pose a serious barrier to a new world order conducive to peaceful coexistence with sustainable growth and development, so long as there are inter-boundary interests strong enough to make parties see themselves as having common interests to protect and promote. Second, there is specialization in knowledge, and therefore everyone cannot have adequate knowledge of every issue, even the ones that affect them. So there would still be the need for delegated authority through the electoral process to allow people with adequate knowledge to handle the issues at hand. And third, there are economies of scale in decisionmaking. There can be only one optimum size of decisionmaking body. Below this size or beyond it the process of decisionmaking may not be effective or efficient. This explains why some sort of world parliament may be a rather large size for effective decisionmaking, and also explains why excessive decentralization of decisionmaking may not be desirable either.

In the same vein, international efforts to promote good governance in less developed countries (LDCs) are often resented as external interference in their domestic affairs. If good governance means a system that has political accountability through a credible electoral process with limited periods in office; bureaucratic accountability and transparency, with an effective and politically autonomous system of correcting abuses; and freedom of association, particularly of associa-

tions based on the pursuit of political, economic, social, and cultural objectives, few LDCs satisfy these requirements so far. However, an Alternative World Order which is based on the transnational character of human interests is more capable of promoting good governance and eliminating fear of domination or interference. It is in this context that Brecher's effort is a welcome one.

## **A Workable New World Order**

If we recognize that eliminating national identities will be difficult, that there are limits to the size of decisionmaking bodies, and that there is therefore the need for some decentralization, the question becomes how to promote a workable new world order based on increased democratization in developing countries, and on sustainable growth and development of the world economy. In other words, how do we promote unity in diversity? As Brecher himself has advocated, the new world order should be based on the conception of the individual as a member of many groups. By implication, such individuals could be brought together by common interest(s). Identifying interests and concerns which cut across national boundaries, therefore, provides possibilities of evolving such a new world order. These include the growing arms buildup globally, environmental degradation and pollution, and growing mass poverty.

The global arms buildup has been of concern to a growing band of people for some decades now. If we recognize that resources available for human use are limited, and that what is used for one purpose is no longer available for other purposes, such a concern becomes even more understandable. In terms of the ratio of military expenditures to total central government expenditures, the average worldwide in 1972-88 was 16.5%.<sup>2</sup> While the developed countries' average was lower, that of Eastern Europe and developing countries was higher than average. Yet a growing burden of military spending has been found to contribute to developmental failures in many developing countries.<sup>3</sup>

The trend in military spending worldwide has reached such a high proportion that analysts have begun to simulate the level of savings that could be made and the scale of development possibilities that could thereby be stimulated should there be reductions in military spending. For example, Camdessus noted that "with regard to military spending, which might be expected to decline somewhat with a reduction in East-West tensions and the settlement of several regional conflicts, imagine that...all countries were to decide to reduce their military

spending to the level of the worldwide average of 4.5% of GDP [Gross Domestic Product] recorded in 1988,...an annual worldwide savings of \$140 billion would be generated."<sup>4</sup>

It is the causes of the growing military spending that pose the greatest threat to world peace. Until very recently it was the arms buildup in First and Second worlds that attracted attention. But an equally alarming level of arms buildup was going on in the Third World. According to McNamara, of the top 15 Third World arms importers during 1978-88, who together accounted for about three-quarters of arms imported by the Third World (i.e. three-quarters of \$371 billion), 13 have been party to conflicts of many years' duration. In addition, many acquire arms to protect against perceived internal and external threats. This observation underscores the urgent need for a new world order that would transcend national boundaries to promote international security.

McNamara proposes solutions to the growing arms buildup. These include substantial limitations on arms exports from arms-producing nations, the tying of financial aid in developing countries to reductions in military expenditures by these countries, and reducing the demand for arms. This, he reckons, could be achieved by introducing into the system of collective security a guarantee by the Security Council and regional organizations of the territorial integrity of member states.<sup>5</sup>

These proposals, which apparently were influenced by the "inevitability of wars" view mentioned earlier, have little chance of success. First, it seems to be assumed that the principle of "voluntary arms exports restraint" would work to reduce arms buildup. But experience suggests the unlikelihood of this being realized. Second, considering that aid donors are also often the arms exporters, if voluntary export restraint is not likely to work, one is left to wonder how effective the tying of aid to reductions in military spending would be. And third, the breakdown of the Old World Order has largely been due to the ineffectiveness of the United Nations, as presently constituted, as an organ for promoting cross-border interests. Thus, there is the need for a mechanism to promote a new world order.

As with armament, international concern about deforestation in developing countries has been growing in recent years. In the industrial countries this has been partly because of the implications for global warming and partly because of the political influence of the "green movements." In developing countries it has been because of the awareness that rapid deforestation may hinder possibilities for sustainable



development, coupled with popular movements by some indigenous groups negatively affected by deforestation processes.

Barracough and Ghimore estimate that over 200 million people currently depend in large part on tropical forests for their livelihood.<sup>6</sup> Through deforestation Africa has been losing three to five million hectares of tropical forest annually, and over 20 million hectares are lost worldwide annually. At this rate, tropical forests in Africa will disappear within 60 years. In fact, Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Togo are reckoned to have already lost almost all of their tropical forests. Serageldin further estimates that if the current rate of tropical forest conversion continues unabated, the world may lose between 5 and 15% of its total plant and animal species between 1990 and 2020.<sup>7</sup>

Until recently the consequences of deforestation and environmental degradation in developing countries were borne by local populations directly dependent on these resources. But now the burdens have spread to larger numbers of people because trans-boundary pollution of the atmosphere and international waterways and global warming threaten the world ecosystems. The burdens are, however, heaviest for the poor.

In proposing solutions to deforestation in sub-Saharan Africa and, by extension, the world over, Serageldin calls for "a balanced perspective that divides the responsibilities between North and South, and among the different parties—local communities, governments, the private sector development agencies, and international and local non-governmental assistance agencies."<sup>8</sup> Serageldin does not, however, spell out what mechanism or institution would be used to share responsibilities. If the United Nations is to be used, the question remains about the incapability of the United Nations, as currently constituted, to deal with such issues. Besides, how equitably can the United Nations share such responsibilities? For example, of the \$625 billion estimated to finance the Global Earth project (the Rio Summit on Environment and Development), developing countries are expected to contribute \$500 billion, while developed countries would contribute \$125 billion.

From the foregoing it is obvious that issues of disarmament and the environment are of international concern and these provide real possibilities for fostering a new world order. These two issues have a third issue in common, namely concern about people and their future. This is why it is argued in this chapter that a peaceful, people-centered, and ecologically sensitive development strategy provides a great promise for promoting an Alternative World Order of the type advocated by Brecher. The mechanism is briefly presented below.

The disarmament campaign, which initially started in the North, has now spread to the South, following the observation that most of the wars in the past four decades have been fought there. So there are groups in both the North and the South who have interests strong enough, and that transcend national boundaries enough, to make them come together with the aim of organizing to influence world decisionmaking. There are the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the North and peace movements in the various regions of the South, such as the various Peace Research Institutes which are affiliates of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Such movements could come together to form a new world peace movement with the aim of influencing decisionmaking in both North and South. Such a new peace movement would be less likely to be suspected of external interference and would reduce the fear or threat of domination.

Environmental campaign groups have similarly been quite active in the North; these include the Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth movements. In the South, some popular movements of forest-dependent poor people have also been organizing campaigns to defend their interests. An example is the alliance of rubber tappers and indigenous groups in the Brazilian Amazon to resist encroachment on their forest habitat by large-scale commercial farmers, ranchers, and land speculators. Another is the Chipko movement of rural people in Northern India. They, too, organized to save their forests. A third example is the struggle of Penan and other tribal groups in Sarawak, Malaysia, against the destruction of their homelands by commercial loggers. By forming human blockades across logging roads leading into their traditional territories in early 1987, they brought the logging industry to a total standstill for a while.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, popular participation or decisionmaking from below, by which is meant the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulatory institutions, in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control, can be an effective way of evolving a new world order. But unlike in the past, when most of these movements were one-issue campaign groups, the new movements could combine two or three related issues like disarmament, environment, and poverty. Such an effort could still be accommodated within the optimum size and specialization of knowledge criteria.

The Africa Peace Research Institute (Nigeria Chapter) is already moving in this direction; that is, it is moving from being solely a peace movement, concerned only with disarmament and conflict resolution

issues, to an organization concerned with peace, the environment, and development. Membership at the moment is primarily in the middle-level and policymaking class. Mass public education to enlighten local people is being planned, although it is so far hampered by lack of funds. The African Peace Research Institutes could coordinate such a program across the globe until it gains wide acceptance. Other issues could then be introduced from time to time. In due course there would emerge a world of different nationals, united by common global interests, coming together to create the type of Alternative World Order being advocated by this book.

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# The Making of Global Citizenship

*Richard Falk*

Citizenship has always been an uneven experience for the peoples of the world. Even within a particular country, it means one thing for privileged classes, the dominant race, religion, and gender, and quite another for those who are economically, socially, politically, and culturally subordinated to varying degrees. Citizenship, in general, expresses membership and the quality of participation in a political community. Its conditions can be specified by law, but its reality is a matter of politics and the rigors of experience. Thus, citizenship can be understood both formally as a status and, more adequately, existentially as a shifting set of attitudes, relationships, and expectations with no necessary territorial delimitation.

This complexity is further compounded by the two sorts of globalization that are impinging on the life experiences of individuals and groups. There is globalization-from-above, reflecting the collaboration between leading states and the main agents of capital formation. This type of globalization disseminates a consumerist ethos and draws into its domain transnational business and political elites. It is the New World Order, whether depicted as a geopolitical project of the U.S. government or as a technological and marketing project of large-scale capital, epitomized by Disney theme parks and franchise capitalism (McDonalds, Hilton, Hertz...).

The second type of globalization is both reactive to these developments and responsive to different impulses and influences. To stress the contrast, it is identified as globalization-from-below, and consists of an array of transnational social forces animated by environmental concerns, human rights, hostility to patriarchy, and a vision of human community based on the unity of diverse cultures seeking an end to poverty, oppression, humiliation, and collective violence. Instead of a New World Order, this type of globalization inclines toward a one-world community premised on a politics of aspiration and desire. This one-world community rests upon the strengthening over time of the institutional forms and activities associated with global civil society.

Globalization-from-below is, in its essence, an expression of the spirit of "democracy without frontiers," mounting a challenge to the homogenizing tendencies of globalization-from-above. At the very least, the construction of global civil society is seeking to extend ideas of moral, legal, and environmental accountability to those now acting on behalf of state, market, and media.

The specific realities of citizenship—as status and experience—take historical shape in relation to this tension between forms of globalization. Different regional currents are also exerting powerful influences on identity, and hence on citizenship: both geographical and economical aggregates and ethno-cultural groupings. As well, more specific, local attachments are expressive of a transfer of loyalty to more immediate circles of community and away from the sovereign state.

The citizenship associated with the New World Order is very much a stratified conception based on beneficiaries and victims, inclusion and exclusion. It presupposes the sustainability of high-growth capitalism. The one-world community is a far more egalitarian conception that makes environmental and cultural sustainability contingent on drastic lifestyle adjustments and the attainment of ecological/equity balances. In this second orientation toward citizenship, the distinction between expediency and utopianism becomes blurred.

The focus here on "global citizenship" is expressive of the dynamics of economic, cultural, and ecological integration that are carrying human experience beyond its modernist phase of state/society relations. The reality of global citizenship is unavoidable, but its form remains contested. It is not yet clear whether it is largely a globalized identity of elites arising from the integration of capital, or whether it represents a growth of human solidarity arising from an extension of democratic principles as a result of the exertions of peoples and their voluntary associations. Both forms of globalization are unfolding before our eyes, but what sorts of balances emerge will reveal the extent to which the so-called New World Order is our destiny for the foreseeable future, or only a disappointing stage that obstructs a move toward fulfilling our normative potential as a species, expressed by the idea of a one-world community.

## **Forms and Varieties of Global Citizenship**

There are at least four dimensions of the extension of citizenship beyond traditional boundaries of nation and state. First of all, the extension of citizenship to its global domain tends to be aspirational in spirit,

drawing upon a long tradition of thought and feeling about the ultimate unity of human experience, giving rise to a politics of desire that posits for the planet as a whole a set of conditions of peace and justice and sustainability. The global citizen, then, adheres to a normative perspective—what needs to happen to create a better world.

Secondly, there is a reinforcing set of trends of much more recent origin that comprise the phenomenon of globalization: the tendency toward global integration, especially economic integration. Financial markets are becoming linked, even consolidated, at a rapid rate; capital formation has become more concentrated in response to global forces; and the annual economic summit of the heads of state in the seven leading industrial countries (G-7) is rapidly becoming an expression of the originality of the world system during its present stage of evolution. In other words, events are rapidly globalizing our outlook.

There is, further, a third element: the adoption of a politics of impossibility based on what I would call attitudes of necessity. An expanding consensus of informed people around the world maintains that, unless certain adjustments are made with respect to energy, resources, and environment, the human species will proceed toward extinction. For the sake of human survival, then, some forms of effective global citizenship are required to redesign political choices on the basis of ecological viabilities. This need is neither a matter of aspiration nor of empirically visible tendency.

Finally, there is implicit in this ecological imperative a politics of mobilization. It is expressed by transnational militancy, and centers on the conviction that it is important to make "the impossible" happen by dedicated action motivated by what is necessary and desirable, rather than by calculations of what seems likely. Such activity can alter the horizons of what seems possible to leaders and to the mainstream public. Such a shift helps provide hope, which is needed, especially when the prospects of success seem poor.

From this dynamic of four levels of engagement we can derive a series of overlapping images of what it might mean to be a global citizen at this stage of history. We have, first of all, the global citizen as a type of global reformer: an individual who intellectually perceives a better way of organizing the political life of the planet, and favors a utopian scheme that is presented as a practical mechanism. Typically such a global citizen has been an advocate of world government or of a world state, or a stronger United Nations—accepting some kind of political centralization as indispensable to overcome today's political fragmentation and economic disparities.

A typical expression of this essential idea of global citizenship was presented to me not long ago at a public meeting in the form of a postcard bearing this message to be sent off by as many persons as possible to the United Nations:

I vote for life and non-violence among the world's peoples and for the scrapping of all nuclear weapons. I vote for the right to water—clean water—food, public health care, a place to live, work and education for all the world's peoples. I vote for love, freedom and peace.

Next to the text was a drawing of an African woman and her unclad infant child looking up expectantly at her. This spirit of global citizenship is almost completely deterritorialized, and is associated with an extension of citizenship as an expression of an affirmation of human unity. It is not a matter of being a formal member and loyal participant in a particular political community, whether city or state. Instead, it is feeling, thinking, and acting for the sake of the human species, and above all for those most vulnerable and disadvantaged. As such, an African baby is an appropriate and powerful symbol of the vulnerability and solidarity of the species as a whole.

This reformist perspective is a very old tradition of thought that locates its origins in the West, recalling Dante's conception of a unified polity in *De Monarchia*. Such visions usually reflect the cultural and political outlook of the political community in which the person making the proposal happens to live. There is an interesting convergence of imperial visions and global reform proposals, and it is hardly accidental that many reformist schemes on a global scale seem to produce global ascendancy for the state, region, or religion of the proponent. Often this kind of vision unconsciously involves a mixture of pragmatism and idealism, implying that a person can promote a better world by enlarging the framework of their own political reality until it encompasses the world. Not surprisingly, then, we find this kind of thinking mainly originating in the United States since the end of World War II, a period roughly corresponding with U.S. ascendancy. The collapse of the Soviet international presence has allowed American versions of a New World Order to gain further prominence and influence.

This idea about making the world better through a set of proposals is basically a rationalist strategy, associated especially with the reactions of a worried and idealistic component of the elite. It seeks to persuade the rest of the elite that its vision of a preferred world order offers a way of conceiving of foreign policy or international politics that is preferable to the conventional wisdom of the realist worldview. Such a style of

idealist advocacy seems to surface and be particularly influential after a major war that is perceived to be futile. The most disturbing major war that the world has known in modern times was undoubtedly World War I, an extended, costly, and disillusioning struggle that appeared even to the winners to achieve very little of enduring value. Despite greater losses and devastation, World War II defeated fascism, and was widely appreciated by public opinion as a necessary, and even a worthwhile, war leading by way of victory to the extension of democratic rule.

Hence, after World War II, despite the advent of the atom bomb, there was little mainstream willingness to discuss the abolition of war. In contrast, during the years after World War I there occurred an enormous upsurge of support among elites and in the public for drastic types of global reform. This period represented the high-water mark for world federalists and aroused popular enthusiasm for world government. Such influence was substantially displaced by the geopolitics that transpired during the Cold War, a framework for states and alliances that saw the best path to peace not as a process of growing international institutionalization, but rather as a matter of balancing power through deterrence, thereby creating a kind of stability between two great blocs of opposed states arrayed on either side of an ideological divide.

There is a second image of global citizenship that is much more a reflection of recent trends, especially in the political economy of the world: the global citizen as a man or woman of transnational affairs. The word "man" is empirically appropriate here because of persisting gender dominance in this sphere. A startling 98 percent of those currently engaged in capital/financial operations on a global level are men. An emergent global identity associated with this expanding vista of business operations became manifest during a conversation with a Danish business leader who was seated next to me on a recent plane ride. He was holding forth on the great benefits of the European Economic Community for the continued prosperity of his business ventures. I asked, partly to disrupt his monologue, whether such convictions were making him feel less Danish, more European? He responded with an expression of puzzlement, and said, "Oh no, I'm a global citizen." What he meant, it turned out, was that his friends, his social network, his travels were all global; that he slept in the same kind of hotels whether he was in Tokyo or London or New York; that he talked English everywhere; that there was a global culture of experience, symbols, infrastructure, food, and music that constituted his way of life; and that being European, as distinct from being Danish or global, didn't any longer have any special significance for him. He probably had to remind himself from time to time that



he was today in Copenhagen, rather than Paris or Rome, or New York or Tokyo. His sense of being global partly expressed a loss of cultural specificity. He seemed to lack any special attachment to place and community. This deterritorialized and homogenized elite global culture is becoming extremely influential as a social force driving the political and economic systems of the world. It is, in my view, the technocratic context being set for European integration as a foundation for more effective forms of European participation in the world economy.

This second understanding of global citizenship focuses upon the impact on identity of the globalization of economic forces. Such identity has many secondary implications. Its guiding image is that the world is becoming unified around a common business and financial elite. An elite that shares interests and experiences comes to have more in common within its membership than it does with the more rooted, ethnically distinct members of its own particular civil society; the result seems to be a denationalized global elite that is, at the same time, virtually without any sense of global civic responsibility.

The U.S. version of this outlook is somewhat distinctive, asserting that the U.S. segment of this new global elite should take charge of the geopolitical management of the world. The editorial pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, for instance, offer a consistent, if unwitting, voice for this kind of perspective, advocating an American-based unipolarity (as a sequel to the bipolarity of the Cold War) to ensure a successful global economy. The *Journal* interpreted the Gulf War in this light, arguing exultantly that the military victory gave the U.S. leadership renewed confidence to play this global role.

In this view, only the United States possesses the will and capability to reorganize the post-Cold War world and to locate control over geopolitics in the North, safeguarding a global economy that is for the North's benefit. Europe and Japan need to understand their secondary role of providing financial assistance and diplomatic support, a position in some respects similar to what existed during the bipolar period of the Cold War, but now stressing the increasing responsibility of richer states for bearing the costs of U.S. guardianship. It is an interesting feature of the Gulf War that the pledges of financial assistance from the countries of Europe, the Gulf, and Japan apparently gave the United States a profit from the battlefield costs of the Gulf War of anywhere between \$7.4 billion (according to the *Newsweek* figures) and \$42 billion. If such a financing scheme for geopolitical affairs were to be made an abiding feature of world order, it would reduce current deficits in world trade. As part of the bargain, the United States would be agreeing to provide

security for the system as a whole: a kind of geopolitical protection service against emerging challenges, especially those in the South.

A third view of global citizenship focuses on the management of the global order, particularly its environmental dimensions but also its economic dimensions. This view is embodied in the report of the Brundtland Commission of a few years ago, *Our Common Future*, stressing the shared destiny on the Earth of the human species as a whole. The report argues that unprecedented forms of cooperation among states and a heightened sense of urgency by states will be required to ensure the sustainability of industrial civilization, a view now extended in the Agenda 21 document developed for the Earth Summit held in Brazil during June 1992. Only by a massive technical managerial effort, coordinated at a global level through the concerted action of states and international institutions, can diplomacy succeed in meeting the overall environmental challenge. This challenge includes problems of the global commons: the process of deforestation and the threats to climate posed by global warming, energy consumption patterns, and environmentally harmful lifestyles. A separate influential expression of this Brundtland outlook can be found in the annual reports of Worldwatch Institute (a Washington-based environmental think tank). The introduction to its 1989 volume even anticipated, from an environmental perspective, George Bush's use of the phrase "the New World Order." Lester Brown, the President of Worldwatch Institute, who oversaw the preparation of the 1991 report on the state of the world, titled his introductory essay "The New World Order." What Brown meant, quite optimistically I think, is that the ecological agenda was likely to displace the geopolitical agenda as the central preoccupation of post-Cold War politics on a global level, and that this development would alter the way most of us understood international political life.

To some extent, Mikhail Gorbachev had urged a similar direction of global policy between 1986 and 1988, what became known as "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy. This Soviet turn toward globalism impressively advocated the importance of disarmament, denuclearization, and a stronger United Nations, justified, in part, by their contribution to solving global environmental problems that could no longer be handled by states, even the powerful ones, acting on their own. Global citizenship conceived from this functional perspective is increasingly caught up in the process of making the planet sustainable for current middle-class lifestyles: working to achieve sustainability in a manner that is sufficiently equitable to be accepted and implemented by political elites and their publics in different parts of the world.

A fourth idea about global citizenship is associated with the rise of regional political consciousness, and it is of great historical relevance at the present time, especially in Europe. It is appropriate to take notice of the fact that Europe, the birthplace of the modern territorial state, is moving along a path that twists and turns, but seems on its way to producing the first significant political innovation since the emergence of the modern territorial state in the 17th century. The Euro-federal process is creating a sufficient structure beyond the state so that it becomes necessary, not merely aspirational, to depict a new kind of political community as emergent, although with features that are still far from distinct and complete. Ironically, the birthplace of the state system—the whole line of development of territorial sovereignty and the modern state apparatus and ideology—may also be the locus of its mutation and rebirth, giving rise to a political reality that is intermediate between a territorial state and a globally unified political order. The future of a unified Europe remains uncertain, especially in light of the dissolution of the East/West divide, controversies as to the acceptability of the Maastricht Treaty, and the pressure to incorporate in the years ahead the far less prosperous and developed former communist states of the East. One troublesome possibility is that the consolidation of states at the regional level could eventually produce a militarized European superstate.

There is no doubt that the incentives for European integration have been powerfully reinforced by competition with the United States and Japan for control of shares at the technological frontiers of the world economy. Additional community-building forces have been also at work, and it is these forces, operating closer to the grassroots, that will determine whether this European experiment will develop into something distinctive and benevolent, making this new European reality a positive contribution to the restructuring of the global system. Can Europe, in other words, forge an ideological and normative identity that becomes more than a strategy to gain a bigger piece of the world economic pie? Can Europe become the bearer of values that are directly related to creating a more peaceful and just world?

Whether regionalism in this enlarged and constructive sense can fulfill its normative potential at this time depends heavily on Europe, and on whether European elites and public opinion can move from the dependencies of the Cold War toward establishing more autonomy, especially in relation to security issues, and a more generous outreach toward the Third World. The severe civil strife in Yugoslavia and the rise of xenophobic passions, as well as the difficulties of proceeding directly

from the failed paternalism of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe to the cruel rigors of the unfettered market, cast renewed doubt upon the pace and prospects of subsequent stages of European integration, as well as on the likely meaning of "Europe." Additionally, a unifying Europe would undoubtedly, at least in the short run, produce tension with the United States, especially challenging the more militarist postures associated with recent U.S. foreign policy. This relationship between a more unified Europe, not preoccupied with a threat from the East, and the United States could also evolve in a mutually beneficial direction. One positive possibility would be building links at the societal level, an extension of transnational democratic tendencies in both regions, based on shared popular resistance to both militarism directed at the South and to the effects of the globalization of capital with its increasing impulse, expressed in conferences of the G-7 and elsewhere, to manage the life of the planet from above without adequate concern for longer-run sustainability and planetary life quality.

The fifth and final form of global citizenship is associated with the emergence of transnational activism that started to become very important for social movements during the 1980s. With respect to the environmental, human rights, and women's movements, activism on a transnational basis became prominent for the first time in history. This meant that the real arena of politics was no longer understood as acting in opposition within a particular state, nor the relation of society and the state, but that it consisted more and more of acting to promote a certain kind of political consciousness transnationally that could radiate influence in a variety of directions, including bouncing back to the point of origin. Amnesty International and Greenpeace are emblematic of this transnational militancy with an identity, itself evolving and being self-transformed, that can't really be tied very specifically to any one country or even any region but may also be intensely local in its activist concerns. It is certainly not "political" in a conventional sense, nor is it "professional," but it draws its strength from both sources. This grassroots phenomenon of organizing for action at societal levels is also occurring widely in various ways in the South. It is important to appreciate that this transnational, grassroots surge is not, by any means, just a Northern phenomenon. It has as one of its central features a shared conviction that upholding human rights and building political democracy provide the common underpinning, although adapted to diverse circumstances, for the types of transnational developments that are desired.

These networks of transnational activity, conceived both as a project and as a preliminary reality, are producing a new orientation

toward political identity and community. Cumulatively, they can be described as rudimentary, generally unacknowledged forms of participation in a new phenomenon, global civil society. These developments include the emergence of institutional construction of arenas of action and allegiance—what many persons are really identifying with—as no longer exclusively bounded by or centered upon the formal relationship that an individual has to his or her own territorial society as embodied in the form of a state. Traditional citizenship is being challenged and remolded by the important activism associated with this transnational political and social evolution. This tendency is not linear. Indeed, backlash is inevitable, as older orientations toward political identity are challenged and more territorially defined interests grow threatened. What is evident, for instance in the recent experience of the United States, is an intense encounter between territorial, statist identities and loyalty and more temporal, global patterns of association, often combined with local engagement. That is, traditional citizenship operates spatially; global citizenship operates temporally, reaching out to a future to-be-created, and making a person a “citizen pilgrim,” that is, someone on a journey to “a country” to be established in the future in accordance with more idealistic and normatively rich conceptions of political community.

### **Global Citizenship in Time and Space**

A satisfactory imagery of global citizenship at this stage of social evolution implies a high degree of unevenness and incoherence, which is a reflection of these five intersecting perspectives becoming actual in varying degrees through time and space. It is necessarily a composite construction that appears in many mixtures. Such mixtures will produce many distinct shapes and patterns of global citizenship, depending on the interaction between the personality of an individual and the specifics of her situation. Further, a recovery of a dynamic and positive sense of citizenship, responsive to the varieties of human situation and diversity of cultural values, presupposes a radical reconstruction of the reigning political culture that informs and underlies political behavior in the modern, postmodern West. The extension of citizenship at this time, especially given the globalization of life and capital, depends on building and promoting a much stronger transnational agenda and sense of community, as well as stimulating more widespread participation at the grassroots, thus contributing to globalization-from-below. It also depends on the emergence of a stronger sense of time, of acting in time in relation to unborn generations.

The overall project of global citizenship, then, needs to be understood also as a series of projects associated with One-World Community horizons. These distinct projects are each responding to the overriding challenge to create a political community that doesn't yet exist, premised upon global or species solidarity, co-evolution and co-responsibility, a matter of perceiving a common destiny, yet simultaneously celebrating diverse and plural entrypoints expressive of specific history, tradition, values, dreams.

Global citizenship in its idealistic and aspirational expression, if mechanically superimposed on the present reality of geopolitics, is a purely sentimental, and slightly absurd, notion that will be completely irrelevant to the operating logic and procedures of the New World Order as promoted briefly by George Bush and associates. In contrast, if global citizenship is conceived to be a political project, associated with the possibility of a future political community of global or species scope, then it assumes, it seems to me, a far more constitutive and challenging political character. From this perspective, time partially displaces space as the essence of what the experience of global citizenship means; citizenship thereby becomes an essentially religious and normative undertaking, based on faith in the unseen, salvation in a world to come—not in heaven, but on earth—guided by convictions, beliefs, and values. So conceived, citizenship brings deep satisfaction to adherents arising from their present engagement in such future possibilities, but without the consoling and demeaning illusion that global citizenship can be practiced effectively in the world of today or the deforming persistence of associating citizenship with unthinking patriotism of the sort mobilized by sovereign states during times of war.

The political implications of this line of thinking about global citizenship need to be worked out. In a preliminary way it is possible to suggest a shift in understanding the essence of politics from an axis of feasibility to an axis of aspiration, from politics as "the art of the possible" to politics as "the art of the impossible." Global citizenship of a positive variety implies confidence in the human capacity to exceed realistic horizons, but it also rests upon the highly pragmatic conviction that what is currently taken to be realistic is not sustainable. To strengthen the foundations for a global civil society to which all women and men belong is to be dedicated to the achievement of a functional utopia, a polity that is meant to achieve both what is necessary and what now seems "impossible."

The multicultural foundations of the embracing idea of global citizenship provide some safeguard against any reliance on one more

totalizing concept deriving from the West, but perhaps this is not enough protection. The very essence of global civil society is the actuality and affirmation of such diversity, which itself then provides the ethos of the forms of global citizenship that are being most fully endorsed. Such a restructuring of our understanding of global citizenship is highly skeptical of the sort of global perspectives of the transnational business elite that appear, by and large, to give up particularity of traditional citizenship, and yet never acquire a sense of world community and accompanying social responsibility. We must learn to distinguish such a threatening type of globalization of consciousness from hopeful forms arising from feelings of solidarity, concerns about equity and nature, strong impulses to combine local rootedness with planetary awareness, and the underlying belief that the security and sanctity of the human community rests, in the end, on embodying an ethos of nonviolence in political practices at all levels of social organization, from the family to the world.

The media-disseminated postulates of the New World Order encourage a consumerist orientation toward global citizenship—the world as an homogenizing supermarket for those with the purchasing power, while those who lack the financial means are excluded and, to the extent required, suppressed by police, paramilitary, and military means, a pattern already prefigured in the Gulf War. It is not by chance that such an approach was christened as the New World Order.

In contrast, the gropings of global civil society encourage a human rights and democracy orientation toward global citizenship—the world as delightfully heterogeneous, yet inclusive of all creation in an overarching frame of community sentiment, premised on the biological and normative capacity of the human species to organize its collective life on foundations of nonviolence, equity, and sustainability. This reality imaginatively already exists—and hence, politically, a One-World Community is an emergent possibility.

## Notes

For additional reflections, see Richard Falk, *Explorations at the Edge of Time: The Prospects for World Order*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992.

## **Part II**

### **Globalization-from-Above: Critiques**



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# **The Greening of the Global Reach**

*Vandana Shiva*

The Green movement grew out of local awareness and local efforts to resist environmental damage. The crisis of deforestation in the Himalayas was a concern first voiced by the local peasant women of Garhwa. The crisis of toxic hazards was pointed out by the affected residents of Love Canal.

Over the past two decades, the pattern has been recognized that major environmental threats were caused by globally powerful institutions like multinational corporations and multilateral development banks like the World Bank, which reach every city, village, field, and forest through their worldwide operations.

Now, in the 1990s, the two decades of the Green movement are being erased. The "local" has disappeared from environmental concern. Suddenly, it seems, only "global" environmental problems exist, and their solution, it is taken for granted, can only be "global."

In this chapter we would like to look more closely at what the concept of the "global" hides and what it projects, how it builds power relations around environmental issues, and how it transforms the environmental crisis from being a reason for transformation into a reason for strengthening the status quo.

## **The "Global" as a Globalized Local**

Unlike what the term suggests, the global as it is emerging in the discussions and debates around the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) is not about universal humanism nor about a planetary consciousness. The life of all people, including the poor of the Third World, and the life of the planet are not at the center of concern in international negotiations on global environmental issues.

The "global" in the dominant discourse is the political space in which the dominant local seeks global control, and frees itself of local, national, and global control. The global in this sense does not represent the universal human interest; it represents a particular local and paro-

chial interest which has been globalized through its reach and control. The G-7, the group of the seven most powerful countries, dictate global affairs, but they remain narrow, local, and parochial in terms of the interests of all the world's communities. The World Bank is not really a bank that serves the interest of all the world's communities. It is a bank where decisions are based on voting weighted by the economic and political power of donors, and in this decisionmaking the communities who pay the real price and are the real donors (such as the tribals of Narmada Valley) have no say. The "global" of today reflects a modern day version of the global reach of the handful of British merchant adventurers who raided and looted large parts of the globe as the East India Company, which then became the British Empire.

Over the past 500 years of colonialism, whenever this global reach has been threatened by resistance, the language of resistance has been co-opted, redefined, and used to legitimate future control.

The independence movement against colonialism revealed the poverty and deprivation caused by the economic drain from the colonies to the centers of economic power. The post-World War II world order, which saw the emergence of independent political states in the South, also saw the emergence of the Bretton Woods institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which took over the language of underdevelopment and poverty, removed their history, and made them the reason for a new bondage based on development financing and debt burdens.

The environmental movement revealed the environmental and social costs generated by maldevelopment, conceived of and financed by agencies like the World Bank. The language of the environment is now being taken over, and being made the reason for a strengthening of "global" institutions like the World Bank, and increasing their global reach.

In addition to the legitimacy derived from co-opting the language of dissent is the legitimacy that comes from a false notion that the globalized "local" is some form of hierarchy that represents geographical and democratic spread, and that lower-order hierarchies should somehow be subservient to it. Operationalizing of undemocratic development projects has been based on a similar false notion of the "national interest," and every local interest has felt morally compelled to make sacrifices for what seemed to be the larger interest. This is the attitude with which each community made way for large dams in post-independence India. It was only during the 1980s, when the different "local" interests met each other nationwide, that they realized that what was

being projected as the "national interest" were the electoral interests of a handful of politicians financed by a handful of contractors such as JP and Associates, who benefited from the construction of all dams such as Tehri and the Narmada Valley project. Against the narrow and selfish interests that have been elevated to the status of the "national" interest, the collective struggle of communities engaged in the resistance against large dams started to emerge as the real, though subjugated, national interest.

In a similar way the World Bank's Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP) was projected as reflecting a global concern about tropical forests. However, when forest movements formed a worldwide coalition under the World Rainforest Movement, it became clear that TFAP reflected the narrow commercial interests of the World Bank and multinational forestry interests such as Shell and Jaako Poyry, and that the global community best equipped to save tropical forests were forest dwellers themselves and farming communities dependent on forest.

### **"Global Environment" or "Green Imperialism"**

Instead of broadening and widening environmental concern and action, the recent emergence of a focus on "global" environmental problems in fact narrowed the agenda.

The multiple environmental concerns that emerged from the grassroots, including the forest crisis, the water crisis, toxic chemicals, and nuclear hazards, have been marginalized. Thus the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) set up at the World Bank addresses only four environmental issues: a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions; protection of biodiversity; a reduction of pollution of international waters; and a reduction in ozone layer depletion.

The exclusion of other concerns from the global agenda is artificial since, for example, the nuclear industry and chemical industry are globally operating industries, and the problems they generate in every local situation are related to their global reach.

The way "global environmental problems" have been constructed hides the role and responsibility of the globalizing local in the destruction of the environment which supports the subjugated locals. The construction becomes a political tool to free the dominant destructive forces operating worldwide of all responsibility, and to shift the blame and responsibility for all destruction to communities that have no global reach.

Consider the case of ozone depletion. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which are a primary reason for ozone depletion, are manufactured by a handful of transnationals like Dupont, with specific locally identifiable manufacturing plants. The rational mechanism for the control of CFC production and use is to control the plants run by Dupont. The fact that substances like CFCs are produced by particular companies in particular plants is totally eclipsed when ozone depletion is turned into a "global" environmental problem. Dupont is left scot-free, and the problem is shifted to the future use of refrigerators and air-conditioners by millions in India and China. Through a shift from the present to the future, the North gains a new political space to control the South. The "global" thus creates the moral base for green imperialism.

It also creates the economic base, since through conventions and protocols, the problem is reduced to the transfer of technology and aid. Dupont then becomes essential to the problem it has created; since Dupont has patented CFC substitutes for which a market has to be found, the financial resources that go into the Montreal Protocol Fund for transfer of technology are in effect subsidies for Dupont, and not for the Third World.

Biodiversity is another area in which control has shifted from the South to the North through its identification as a global problem. As in the case of ozone depletion, biodiversity erosion has taken place because of habitat destruction in diversity-rich areas by dams, mines, and highways financed by the World Bank to help transnational corporations, and by substitution of diversity-based agricultural and forest systems by the monoculture of green revolution wheat, rice, and eucalyptus plantations, which are also supported and planned by the World Bank to create markets for the seed and chemical industries.

The most important step in biodiversity conservation is to control the World Bank's planned destruction of biodiversity. Instead, by treating biodiversity as a global resource, the World Bank emerges as a protector of biodiversity through its GEF, and the North demands free access to the South's biodiversity through the biodiversity convention. However, biodiversity is a resource over which local communities and nations have sovereign rights. Globalization becomes a political means to ensure an erosion of these sovereign rights, and a means to shift control over and access to biological resources from the gene-rich South to the gene-poor North. The "global environment" thus emerges as a principal weapon through which the North can gain worldwide access to natural resources and raw materials on the one hand, and can force a worldwide sharing of the environmental costs it has generated while

it retains a monopoly on benefits reaped from the destruction on the other.

The motto for the North at UNCED and the other global negotiations seems to be, "What is yours is mine, what is mine is mine."

This lopsided view of a common future is facilitated by the idea of the "global." The construction of the global environment narrows the options for the South, while increasing them for the North. Through its global reach, the North exists in the South. The South, however, exists only within itself, since it has no global reach. Thus the South can only exist locally, while the North exists globally.

Solutions to global environmental problems can come only from the global, i.e., the North. Since the North is abundant in industrial technology and capital, if the North has to provide a solution to environmental problems, they must be reduced to the currency in which the North dominates. The problems of ecology are transformed into a problem of transfer of technology and finance. What is eclipsed from the analysis is that this assumption that the South needs technology and finances from the North is both a major cause of the environmental crisis, and a major reason for the drain of resources from South to North. While the governments of the South demand "new and additional sources of finance" for the environment, they ignore the reverse transfer of \$50 billion per year of capital from the poor South to the affluent North. The old order does not change through the environment discussions. It gets more entrenched.

## **The Problem of False Causality**

With the screening out of the role of the globalized local in local environmental destruction worldwide, the multiple facets of destruction are treated as local causes of problems with global impact. Among the main impacts of maldevelopment and colonialism that have occurred simultaneously are the rise of poverty, the increase of environmental degradation, the growth of population, and the polarization and conflict between genders and ethnic communities.

Extraction of surplus and exploitation and destruction of resources have left people without livelihoods. Without access to resources for survival, the poor have been forced to generate economic security through large families. Collapse of social cohesion and economic stability have provided the ground for ethnic conflict.

However, instead of seeing these multifaceted problems as caused by the global domination of certain narrow interests of the

North, they are selectively transformed from consequence to cause. Poverty and population are turned into *causes* of environmental degradation. Diversity is turned into a disease and identified as a cause for ethnic conflict.

False causality is used as a causal explanation for false connections. Thus some UNCED documents have gone to the extent of pointing to population growth as a cause of the explosive growth in toxic chemicals. A problem caused by an irresponsible chemical industry is converted into a problem caused by fertility rates in the poor countries of the South. The 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh was similarly linked causally to babies in Bangladesh.

### **The "Global" is not Planetary**

The image of planet Earth used as a visual in the discourse on global ecology hides the fact that, at the ethical level, the "global" as construct does not symbolize planetary consciousness. The global reach by narrow and selfish interests does not use planetary or Gaian ethics. In fact, it excludes the planet and peoples from the mind, and puts global institutions in their place. The concept of the planet is invoked by the most rapacious and greedy institutions to destroy and kill the cultures which use a planetary consciousness to guide their daily actions in the concrete. The ordinary Indian woman who worships the "tulsi" plant worships the cosmic as symbolized in the plant. The peasants who treat seeds as sacred see in them a connection to the universe. Reflexive categories harmonize balance from planets to plants to people. In most sustainable traditional cultures, the large and the small have been linked so that limits, restraints, and responsibilities are always transparent and cannot be externalized. The large exists in the small, and hence every act has not just global but cosmic implications. Treading gently on the Earth becomes the natural way to be. Demands in a planetary consciousness are made on the self, not on others.

The moral framework of the global reach is the opposite. There are no reflexive relationships. The G-7 can demand a forest convention that imposes international obligations on the Third World to plant trees. However, the Third World cannot demand of the industrialized countries a reduction in use of fossil fuels and energy. All demands are externally dictated, in a one-way direction, North to South. The way the "global" has been structured, the North (as the globalized local) has all rights and no responsibilities, and the South has no rights, all responsibilities. "Global ecology" at this level becomes a moralization of immo-

reality. It is empty of any ethics for planetary living. It is based not on concepts of universal humanity, but on universal bullying.

## **Democratizing “Global” Institutions**

Creating new mechanisms for responding to the global ecological crisis was one of the agenda items of UNCED. Problematizing the “global” through the collective articulation of all local concerns and interests, in all their diversity, is the creative intervention in global/local conflicts as they are emerging.

Democratizing of the “global” is the next step. Since what exists as the global is not the democratic distillation of all local and national concerns worldwide, but is the imposition of a narrow group of interests from a handful of nations on a world scale, democratizing of international interests is essential if genuine democracy is to exist at local and national levels.

The roots of the ecological crisis at the institutional level lie in the alienation of the rights of local communities to have a say in environmental decisions. The reversal of ecological decline involves strengthening local rights.

Every local community, equipped with rights and obligations, constitutes a new global order for environmental care. However, the current trend in global discussions and negotiations is to take rights further upward toward higher non-local centralism in agencies like the World Bank.

Multilateralism in a democratic set-up must mean a lateral expansion of decisionmaking, based on the protection of local community rights where they exist, and the reinstitution of rights where they have been eroded. Two central planks of local environmental rights include:

- the right to information
- the right to prior consent: any activity with potential impact on the local environment should require the consent of the local people.

Basing an environmental order on globally institutionalized local rights also avoids the impossible issue of representability and the terrible mess of international NGO’s “selecting” national NGOs to “select” local NGOs to represent “people” at global negotiations.

The “global” must bend to the local, since the local exists with nature, while the “global” exists only in offices of the World Bank and the IMF and the headquarters of multinational corporations. The local is everywhere. The ecological space of global ecology is the integration



of all locals. The "global" in global reach is a political space, not an ecological one.

Institutionally, we should not worry about how to get the last tribal person to sit at World Bank decisions in Washington. What we need to ensure is that no World Bank decision about the resources of tribal people is taken without their prior informed consent.

Whether the local as global and the global as local will exist in a way different from the imperialistic order of the last 500 years depends on this process of democratization. The imperialistic category of global is a disempowering one at the local level. Its coercive power comes from removing limits for the forces of domination and destruction and imposing restrictions on the forces of conservation.

The ecological category of global is an empowering one at the local level because it charges every act, every entity, with the largeness of the cosmic and planetary and adds meaning to it. It is also empowering because precisely by embodying the planetary in the local, it creates conditions for local autonomy and local control.

An Earth democracy cannot be realized with global domination by undemocratic structures. It cannot be realized on the basis of an anthropocentrism that excludes the rights of non-human nature. And it cannot be realized if survival of the planet is used to deny the right to survival of those who are poor and marginal today because they have borne the accumulated burden of centuries of subjugation.

# **Economic Globalization**

## **A New Geography, Composition, and Institutional Framework**

*Saskia Sassen*

There has been a world economy for several centuries. But its geography, composition, and institutional framework have changed over time. The "world economy" never included the entire planet; it always had more or less clearly defined boundaries. And while most major industries were involved, different types of industries dominated in different periods, generating historically distinct economic structures. Finally, the institutional framework through which the world economy coheres has also varied sharply, from the earlier empires through the quasi-empire of the Pax Americana and its collapse in the 1970s. It is from this collapse that we see emerging a new phase of the world economy. There is considerable agreement among specialists that in the mid-1970s new alignments became evident. The main trends can be defined in terms of geography, composition, and institutional framework.

### **Geography**

The geography of the world economy has changed from a North-South axis to a greater intensity in East-West transactions; significant parts of Africa and Latin America became detached from their hitherto strong articulation with world markets in commodities and raw materials. This new geography can be illustrated with foreign direct investment (FDI) flows, which form the major component of international transactions.

There was a time when Latin America was the major recipient region of FDI. But FDI flows to developed countries have grown at an average annual rate of 46% since 1985, reaching an overall value of

US\$163 billion in 1989, out of a total worldwide FDI flow of US\$196 billion.

FDI flows have become sharply concentrated: the top five recipient countries accounted for 57% of world inflows in the 1980s; the five major exporters of capital (United States, United Kingdom, Japan, France, and Germany) accounted for 70% of total outflows. By the mid-1980s, 75% of all FDI stock, and 84% of FDI stock in services, was in developed countries. For much of the 1980s, the aggregate net flow of financial resources to developing countries was negative. (The bank crisis of 1982 sharply cut loans to developing countries.)

FDI flows can be constituted through many different processes. For the last two decades, the growth in FDI has been embedded in the internationalization of production of goods and services and in the growth of financial flows. The internationalization of production is particularly important in constituting FDI flows into developing countries. Although flows into developing countries were far lower than into developed countries, they were high by historical standards. Since 1985 they have been growing at an annual rate of 22%, up from 3% during 1980-84 and 13% in 1975-79.

This expanded capital flow affects the major developing regions diversely. The share of worldwide flows going to developing countries as a whole fell from 25% to 19% between the early 1980s and the late 1980s. Latin America's share fell from 49% to 38%. Most of the capital instead flowed into East, South, and Southeast Asia, where the annual rate of growth was up to 37% between 1985-89. Southeast Asia's share of the capital flow rose from 37% to 48%. These figures point to the formation of Southeast Asia as a crucial transnational space for production. It has surpassed Latin America and the Caribbean for the first time ever as the largest host region for FDI in developing countries.

## **Composition**

In the 1950s, FDI was concentrated in raw materials, other primary products, and resource-based manufacturing; world trade was the major international flow. Over the past decade there has been a sharp increase in the weight of direct foreign investment in services (mostly in the form of FDI), and in the role played by the international credit markets in international finance and services. Foreign direct investment grew sharply in the 1980s—much more rapidly than world trade and world output. Since 1983, after the slump of 1981-82, global FDI grew at an average of 29% a year, an historic high. This is three times faster

than the growth of the export trade, and four times the growth of world output. Since 1985 the gap between the growth rate of exports and that of foreign direct investment has sharply widened.

Many factors have fed the growth of FDI: several developed countries became major capital exporters, most notably Japan; the number of cross-border mergers and acquisitions grew sharply; the service sector and transnational service corporations emerged as major components in the world economy.

Services, which were about 24% of worldwide stock of FDI in the early 1970s, had grown to 50% of stock and 60% of annual flows by the end of the 1980s. The single largest recipient of FDI in services in the 1980s was the European Community—yet another indication of a very distinct geography in world transactions. But service flows have also increased for less developed countries. While there are severe problems of measurement, by the mid-1980s services accounted for an estimated 60% of all international transactions, whereas only a few years before, trade in goods had been the dominant category.

## **Institutional Framework**

Is this development a mere quantitative change or rather a change in the regime of the world economy? Elsewhere I have argued that the ascendancy of services and especially international finance produces a new regime with distinct consequences for other industries, especially manufacturing, and for regional development insofar as regions tend to be dominated by particular industries.

We can't take the world economy for granted and assume that because there are international transactions there is a world economy. How did the "world economy" cohere as a system? The breakdown in the early 1970s of the Bretton Woods agreements, which provided for fixed exchange rates, coordinated economic stimulation, and use of the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency, robbed the world economy of the institutional framework it had operated under since the end of World War II. This breakdown was clearly linked to the decline of the United States as the single dominant economic and military power in the world. Japanese and European multinationals and banks became major competitors with U.S. firms.

The central role played by transnational corporations (TNCs) in the system that emerged can be seen in the fact that they accounted for 80% of international trade in the United States in the late 1980s; further, more than a third of U.S. "international trade" was actually intra-firm trade.

Almost all FDI and a large share of technology transfers were undertaken by TNCs. Furthermore, while the financial credit markets, which grew explosively in the 1980s, helped pay for the huge government deficits, to a disproportionate extent they served the needs of TNCs.

TNCs also emerged as a source for financial flows to developing countries, both directly through inflows of FDI and indirectly through the stimulus of FDI on other forms of financial flows. The bank crisis of 1982 sharply cut bank loans to developing countries, to the point that for much of the 1980s the aggregate net flow of financial resources to developing countries was negative, consisting mostly of interest payments to U.S. banks. TNCs largely replaced the banks. When all is said and done, TNCs are strategic organizers of the world economy. Their role also points to the growing importance of internationalization in the production of goods and services.

International credit markets have emerged as another crucial institution organizing the world economy. The central role of markets in international finance, a key component of the world economy today, was in part brought about by the so-called Third World bank crisis formally declared in 1982. This crisis—actually a crisis for the major transnational banks in the United States—combined with financial deregulation, created a space into which small, highly competitive financial firms could move, launching a whole new era in the 1980s in terms of speculation, innovation, and levels of profitability. The result was a highly unstable period, but one with almost inconceivably high levels of profits which fed a massive expansion in the volume of international transactions. Deregulation was a key mechanism facilitating this type of growth, a growth centered in internationalization and in speculation. Markets provide an institutional framework organizing these massive financial flows.

The formation of transnational trading blocs is yet another development that contributes to the new institutional framework. The two major blocs are the North American Free Trade Agreement and the European Community. (The Asian bloc in Japan's zone of influence is far less structured.) The specifics vary considerably, but both blocs greatly enhance the capability of capital to move across borders. These blocs represent the formalization of capital as a transnational category.

## **Some Consequences**

One consequence of the extremely high level of profitability in the financial industry was the devaluing of manufacturing as a sector—

though not necessarily all branches. Deregulation made finance so profitable that it took investment away from manufacturing. Finance allows superprofits by maximizing the circulation of money (e.g., securitization, multiple transactions over a short period of time, selling debts, etc.) in a way that manufacturing does not. One can bundle a large number of mortgages and sell the bundle many times, even though the number of houses involved stays the same. This option is basically not available in manufacturing, in which a product is made and sold; once it enters the realm of circulation it enters other sectors of the economy, and it is to these that the profits from subsequent sales accrue. Furthermore, finance offers the possibility of superprofits without much of a "labor question." The non-professional workforce in finance and in services generally is in a far more subordinate position than the workforce in major mechanized factories, where the shop floor is a terrain for contestation and workers' struggles.

The possibility of superprofits in finance engenders a distortion in the valuation of different sectors of the economy. It devalues manufacturing, which can't produce such superprofits. It can also strengthen the idea that manufacturing needs to be "more" profitable, which in turn can justify the lowering of wages and the extraction of give-backs from workers. Another consequence, more difficult to specify but with strong political implications, is the devaluation not only of manufacturing but of all "local," place-bound activities. The glamour of the global has the effect of depreciating the local.

The developments of the 1980s represent a massive assault on working-class people. This assault is evident in objective conditions: the decline in earnings among the lower third or even bottom half of the earnings distribution in most major developed economies, and now even in Japan; the declining power of unions; the expulsion of growing numbers from the "mainstream economy" (i.e., permanent unemployment). And it is evident in less-developed countries in the form of massive increases in poverty, hunger, and unemployment. Yet the forms of growth that have pushed matters to this desperate condition have their own limitations, as evidenced by the financial and real-estate crisis in many countries. In the United States these limits can be seen in infrastructure breakdowns produced by inadequate investment—due to the greater profitability of speculative financial investments and to the enormous national debt.

Indeed, much of the financial growth of the 1980s was based on the growing debt: deregulation and financial innovation made it possible to make superprofits on the sale of public and private debt to an

extent and with kinds of debt hitherto unknown. But making money by accelerating the circulation of debt does not necessarily contribute to strengthening the material base of an economy, be that infrastructure or manufacturing. If the profits made from the accelerated circulation of debt are not at some point taken out of this circuit and redirected to manufacturing and infrastructure, not much happens economically—even when a lot may be happening financially.

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# **Latin America in the New World Order**

***Xabier Gorostiaga***

The depth and speed of the changes throughout the world make the 1990s very strategic. The structural and all-encompassing nature of these changes have the character of a "fourth long wave" in the cycles described by the Soviet economist Kondratief.

We are also experiencing a crucible of Copernican changes, greater than those seen in the 1914-1917 period. The 20th century started late, in 1914, with the great confrontation between capitalism and socialism, and ended early in 1989, with the toppling of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. The 21st century has begun with a confrontation between North and South, between capital and labor. While this is a long-standing confrontation, it is entering a new phase with qualitatively different parameters.

1992 is a symbolic year. The "discovery" of Latin America cannot be celebrated, since the continent had its own identity and civilization when the Spaniards arrived. What was discovered in 1492 was universal history and the globe as one totality. In the 1990s humanity itself is being discovered as one world, an inseparable unity, a communal home linked to a common destiny. That destiny is the product of a technological revolution, a revolution in information, social communication, and transportation, and also of a growing consciousness of the threat of collective suicide for having overstepped the bounds of the planet.

In addition to symbolism, 1992 represents a tremendous challenge for Latin America's self-discovery and self-construction: to overcome these last 500 hidden years. This challenge, however, comes in "times of cholera,"<sup>1</sup> which reflect the depth of the economic and political crises facing Latin America. On a global level, we are also witness to the massive exodus of the Kurdish people, the ecological disaster in Bangladesh, the civil war in Yugoslavia, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

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Persistent and growing starvation in Africa surpasses all these other human tragedies in drama, all at a moment in which both "the end of history" and the "New World Order" are being irresponsibly proclaimed.

In this chapter, we hope to underscore the contradictory, dialectical, and global character of the changes taking place. Latin American intellectuals move between hope and desperation, anguish and rage, while the people are using their ingenuity to survive increasing impoverishment.

In the first part of the chapter we analyze the structural causes of this new crossroads in the broadest framework of the restructuring of capital and the New World Order proclaimed in the wake of the Gulf War. The second part assesses the impact of these changes in Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of the trilateral mega-markets and the U.S. recession. Finally, we indicate some characteristics of the dialectic between increasing democracy and economic submission, both of which are contributing to the crisis of ungovernability and political weariness that affects both the Left and Right throughout Latin America.

## **Far-Reaching Structural Changes**

We agree with historian Paul Kennedy that never before in history has there been such a concentration and centralization of capital in so few nations and in the hands of so few people. The countries that form the Group of Seven, with their 800 million inhabitants, control more technological, economic, informatics, and military power than the rest of the approximately four billion people who live in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. This concentration of capital corresponds to the character of the new technological revolution, in which the cycle of capital accumulation depends less and less on intensive use of natural resources, labor, or even of productive capital, and more on an accumulation of technology based on the intensive use of knowledge. The concentration and centralization of technological knowledge is more intense and monopolistic than other forms of capital, and only increases the gap between North and South.

The repercussions of this situation have led to the growing "de-materialization" of production, in which less and less raw material is required per product produced. Over the last 20 years, the Japanese production process has reduced by a third the amount of raw materials used per product. Even more significant is the accelerated rhythm of this reduction. In the 1965-76 period, raw material use shrank 0.6% annually; since 1980, the annual reduction has been 3%, nearly a six-fold drop.

This de-materialization has resulted in a tendency toward lower real prices for the 33 principal raw materials, the majority of which are the South's export products. This price deterioration is even more pronounced in recent years. Automation of production also means that labor loses value relative to capital, in both the North and South. Both processes lead to a permanent structural deterioration of value relative to what are supposedly the South's comparative advantages in production and world trade.

Those phenomena coincide with the transnationalization of systems of production, financing, and marketing, which for the first time permits a truly global market.

The new areas of expansion of global accumulation for the end of the century—such as space, sea, and energy—are completely subordinated to the control of economic, technological, and military power, which will provoke even greater concentration and centralization, and thus, a greater gap and asymmetry between North and South.

The revolution in telecommunications, transportation, and informatics has produced management innovations that have further facilitated mergers of capital and technology, whereby private business in Latin America and the South in general is increasingly incorporated in a dependent way into the logic of centralized capital. National business, both private and state-run, is increasingly marginalized and in an asymmetric position vis-à-vis transnational industry, and thus more and more isolated from the logic of the domestic market and the survival of the large impoverished majority.

This situation is even more serious if we consider that in the same decade the net financial transfers from the South to the North were the equivalent of ten Marshall Plans. In the case of Latin America, according to the most recent Latin American Economic System (SELA) report, foreign debt-service payments alone were 80% more than the total amount of foreign investment in Latin America. If we include Latin American capital in the North (on the order of \$160 billion) and the deterioration in the terms of trade (some \$100 billion), Latin America's financial and productive debacle in the 1980s could be compared to the worst years of colonial pillage.

We have described this structural phenomenon as an avalanche of North against South, of capital against labor. Never before in history, not even in colonial times, has such an extreme bipolarization of the world existed. This bipolarization, from the South's perspective, is the fundamental element of the structural changes defining the end of this century.

## Worldwide Political Changes

Four fundamental elements define the political characteristics of the 1990s:

**The profound crisis in Eastern Europe.** This has had dramatic repercussions throughout the world, touching off a new historic phase with the end of the Cold War. From a Third World perspective, the evaluation of these changes is very complex. One concern from the Latin American experience is whether or not there really ever was socialism—understood as a social, economic, and political alternative to capitalism—in the Eastern bloc. The majority of the Eastern European countries never developed a socialism indigenous to their own countries, instead forming a defensive and imposed military alliance. The negative impact of this militaristic and statist socialism was tremendous in Latin America. Dogmatism, top-down organizing styles, and statism imported from the Eastern European experience affected all the Communist parties and the majority of the Latin American Left. Nevertheless, the Socialist bloc served as a counterbalance of sorts that permitted a geopolitical space and a rear guard of support for changes in the South.

The collapse of Eastern Europe means the loss of a paradigm, of that economic and geopolitical counterbalance. At the same time, it potentially opens ideological and practical space for new experiences in a world leaning toward resolving conflicts by negotiation and the use of international law.

“Real” or “state” socialism, which was successful in toppling feudalism as well as in creating an important industrial base, collapsed definitively in the face of the technological revolution and the consumer society. The crisis of democracy is, however, the political root of this collapse.

The majority of Eastern Europe is heading toward a rapid Latin Americanization, and could easily be transformed into an area of natural resources and cheap labor for further development in Western Europe and the rest of the North.

In the coming years, Eastern Europe will absorb Europe’s political attention and much of its available financial resources, affecting both politically and economically the attention needed by the South. The impact on the South of the changes in Eastern Europe, however, could be very different over time from what they have been to date. The direct relationship between the South and the former Eastern bloc, transformed by its crisis, could become an international source of creativity and

complementarity. For this to happen, the complexities and isolation facing both civil societies will have to be overcome.

**European unity.** Hegemonized by German unification, a new European unity has changed the correlation of international forces. A united Europe could become the productive, financial, and commercial center of the world, together with Japan and the Pacific nations. This would leave the United States in an increasingly vulnerable position, and could lead to a new divvying up of world "spheres of influence." It would also open the possibility for the countries of the South to take advantage of new spaces and contradictions in the system.

**Emergence of the Pacific basin bloc.** As the century comes to a close, Japan and Southeast Asia are emerging as a preeminent industrial, financial, and technological power bloc. Japan, however, though an economic giant, is diminutive in political stature. It has not been able to play a foreign policy role corresponding to its economic power. From the perspective of Latin America and the South, Japan's history, culture, race, and religion are seen as very different from those of the North. The Japanese are not white, Western, or Christian. But the structural forces of the market and the different institutions of the Group of Seven tend to draw Japan into the northern orbit, thus increasing the avalanche of North against South and capital against labor.

**The loss of U.S. economic hegemony.** This phenomenon coincides with the three described above, but has its own clear economic roots. The United States has been unable to overcome its fiscal and commercial deficits and is saddled by a gargantuan military budget. Its tendency to base the last decade's growth on a rapidly increasing debt has transformed the only country whose national currency functioned as an international reserve into the most indebted nation on the face of the Earth.

Its loss in technological competitiveness and productivity means that the United States will not be able to maintain its political hegemony unless it is based fundamentally in military and ideological power. This, in turn, requires a military budget of about \$300 billion annually, and control over some two-thirds of all media images produced in the world. The financial instability of October 1987 and the more recent Savings and Loan crisis, along with the growing deterioration in the U.S. productive and social infrastructure, indicates that the debt, deficits, and military budget are simply no longer sustainable under these conditions.

The United States, Europe, and Japan comprise a "neo-trilateralism," hegemonized by the Group of Seven, with a constellation of world institutions organized under its control (the International Monetary Fund

and World Bank). The United Nations itself, with its financial dependence and the veto power that the key economic powers hold in the Security Council, still maintains a framework in which the majority of the member countries are unable to benefit from equitable and democratic participation.

The threat to the South is increased by the alliance of geo-economic interests shared by the countries in the Group of Seven, which are incapable of attending to the cultural, religious, and national characteristics of the many different peoples of the South, increasingly impoverished and marginalized. The proposal on the table from the North is integration into "market culture," with a liberalization of trade, finances, and privatization which reduces state autonomy. This assumes that market forces will be able to overcome poverty and achieve political and democratic stability in an increasingly unified world.

## **A Crisis of Civilization**

Five hundred years ago, the world emerged as one geographic and historic unit. Now the world's population is recognized as one inseparable, although dramatically divided, entity. The trilateral North, which revolves around the Group of Seven, has increased and centralized power in all possible forms. The restructuring of the capitalist system tends to reinforce this polarization and asymmetry given that there is no longer the countervailing weight of the Soviet Union. The increasing division of the world, between a North of few people and many resources and a South with many people and few resources, is the axis of the current crisis. It is true that the terms "North" and "South" simplify the world's problems, but they also allow us to underline the dominant contradiction.

The current model of society in the North—its style of development and lifestyle—cannot be reproduced throughout the world because it has definite ecological and population limits and carries within it many structural contradictions. One such contradiction is between the model's requirement for progressive accumulation—with its growing concentration of capital, technology, and power in the North—and the excluded majorities in the South who demand not only survival but also a standard of living conducive to peace and democracy.

The crisis is not only one of distribution and equity, it is a crisis of values and the direction humanity is taking. For this reason we can call it a crisis of civilization. Society worldwide is neither sustainable nor stable under these conditions. Democracy is not possible for the major-

ity of the world's population, and this fact is leading to increasing ungovernability in many nations of the world. Samuel Huntington, the ideologue of the Trilateral Commission in the 1970s, called the increase in Third World demands for democracy a threat. "Guiding" democratic processes in the South has become an imperial necessity if the North wants to maintain its current privileges. What we could call Low Intensity Democracy in Latin America is a structural product of the inability of the material base to sustain even these incipient processes of democratization.

To lend legitimacy to this situation, there is an attempt underway to ideologize the North-South confrontation, presenting the South as the new enemy, in the wake of the demise of the "evil empire." The South is portrayed as a den of evil goings-on, a dangerous place for citizens from the North. In this vision, the threats of drugs, immigration, and political instability, along with regional conflicts, all come from the South.

The objective structural gap between North and South is widened with this subjective ideologization, which has deep and racist roots. Instead of confronting the causes of the crisis, this ideological view looks at the consequences, and seeks to lay blame there.

## **Latin America: Harvest of the 1980s**

The so-called "lost decade" was a complex and dialectical one. Latin America's competitive capacity in the 1990s is substantially lower than it was in the 1980s. Losses in foreign trade and in foreign investment, thoroughgoing decapitalization and disinvestment—both productive and social—as well as other well-known indices from this "lost decade," demonstrate profound and structural economic deterioration throughout Latin America. Most of the continent, with the possible exception of Mexico, Chile, and, in a certain sense, Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela, is simply not an attractive panorama to capital. The appearance of cholera in "the times of adjustment" symbolizes Latin America's growing "Africanization" and economic marginalization. The region also experienced political marginalization as the North's attention swerved to the Middle East conflict and the strategic interests involved there, as well as to the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The "lost decade," however, is much more complex. Latin American society is qualitatively different than it was at the beginning of the 1980s. The "lost decade" coincides with, and is in part a cause of, the "explosion of Latin American democracy" in the 1980s. Electoral democ-

ratization is nothing more than a reflection of a radical and profound democracy that has touched different areas of civil society. Decades of struggle against oligarchies, dictatorships, and militarism have gelled in this revolution of civil society.

This complex dialectic of economic crisis and revolution in civil society is the defining characteristic of the 1980s. The democratic participation of the organized and mobilized majorities in their own civic institutions has created new historical subjects that demand participation in the economy, politics, religion, and culture.

This dynamic of civil society has obvious exceptions, including Guatemala, Argentina, Panama, and Peru. The culture of terror imposed by military repression in the first two cases, the U.S. military occupation of Panama, and the economic collapse of Peru explain the disintegration of civil society in these nations. This contradictory dynamic leads to a state of ungovernability, in which the demands that arise as part of the advance of democracy find no material base to sustain them. This ungovernability is expressed in the rapid loss of prestige of the neoliberal political leadership that has controlled the majority of electoral democracies since the mid-1980s. Menem in Argentina, Collor de Mello in Brazil, Fujimori in Peru, Cristiani in El Salvador, and Callejas in Honduras are examples of a broader phenomenon so starkly expressed in the ungovernability of Nicaragua and Panama. In neither of those countries has the U.S.-backed neoliberal project brought political stability or economic recovery.

Ungovernability is creating a society of beggars and delinquents who seek individual survival at any cost. This unorganized mass is an important challenge for alternative projects in Latin America. It is a group easily co-opted by escapist religions, drugs, and growing migration out of Latin America, as well as by violent ultra-leftism unconnected to viable proposals. Between hope and disaster: that is how this dialectic of sentiments could be characterized. In another historical moment, Pablo Neruda eloquently declared a similar feeling: They can cut all the flowers, but they will never stop the spring.

## **Debt, Neoliberal Adjustment, and the Initiative for the Americas**

The continuing debt crisis and the structural adjustment processes underway allow us to visualize the North's project to restructure Latin American capitalism and reinsert the continent into the world capitalist market. Debt has substituted for the direct investment of the 1970s as a

mechanism to extract net financial transfers out of Latin America. It puts the state and even private enterprise into a submissive position with its denationalizing effect. Latin American attempts to renegotiate the debt individually were unable to achieve equitable terms. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, USAID, and, more recently, the Inter-american Development Bank have imposed overlapping conditions on national governments and enterprises, such that the adjustment policies linked to these conditions have severely weakened Latin America's negotiating capacity. It is in this context that President Bush's Enterprise for the Americas Initiative must be understood.

SELA's cogent April 1991 analysis of the plan states, "The Bush Initiative for the Americas does not propose a strategy for the development of the region, but rather constitutes a mechanism to accelerate the economic reforms underway, whose principal elements have been promoted by multilateral financial institutions, with the support of the U.S. government...It responds to economic needs and concrete strategies of the United States."

The Enterprise for the Americas plan is a product of the need for a macroeconomic readjustment of the U.S. economy in light of its profound recession and its lack of international competitiveness. The United States needs the creation of a hemispheric "mega-market" from which to confront both a united Europe with its new zone of economic and political influence in Eastern Europe, and the mega-market of Japan and the Pacific nations.

The extension of a free market from Alaska to Patagonia would permit the United States to share the costs of its own adjustment with Canada and Latin America. At the same time, it would increase U.S. negotiating power in the debates on the new global trade agreements now taking place in the Uruguay Round GATT talks. Given the possibility of failure in reaching new agreements, the United States needs to broaden its competitive capacity to take on trade agreements—both bilateral and multilateral—with Europe and Japan.

Debt, trade, and investment—the three pillars of the Enterprise for the Americas plan—bring with them strict conditions. This is already evident in relation to market mechanisms which have not been used for debt reduction; in official negotiations, financial organizations refuse to accept the real, substantially reduced, market price of the debt as set by the secondary market. By the same logic, conditions for the incorporation of U.S. investment in Latin America will be linked to the acceptance of conditions regarding the debt and the non-reciprocal and asymmetrical use of the market, which will never extend to a free flow of the



**Figure 1**  
**Total US Debt (in \$ billions)**

<b>Debt:</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>
Federal	914	3,200
State	316	850
Business	829	2,100
Consumer	1,300	3,000
Total	3,400	9,150
Gross Domestic Product	2,732	5,300
Foreign debt	+180	-800
Debt service/budget	13%	20%
Savings	7%	4%

Source: US Commerce Department

workforce between the United States and Latin America, even in the case of Mexico.

The plan should be analyzed first from the perspective of the recession and the need for a macroeconomic adjustment in the United States. It will permit the United States to face, in better conditions, its structural indebtedness and loss of international competitiveness, and expand its market toward a zone of privileged influence to increase its strategic security and its continental supply of natural resources, particularly petroleum. This will allow the United States to maintain its geostrategic hegemony based on a geoeconomic competitiveness that it currently lacks.

The total U.S. debt, shown in Figure 1, reflects the largely fictitious nature of the U.S. economy, which depends on the international transfers superior to \$100 billion and on a progressive indebtedness of the state, private business, and consumers.

In one short decade, the United States went from being the world's largest international creditor to being its greatest debtor, almost doubling its budget for debt servicing and reducing the country's savings by nearly half. That has created an imminently unstable situation. The United States simply cannot continue to consume 25% of the world's energy, 50% of which is imported. It cannot continue to maintain gasoline taxes six times less than those of Japan, Germany, Italy, and France. If the United States were to increase its gasoline tax to the level of its economic competitors, it could increase its income by \$180 billion annually. This squandering of energy explains the decision to get involved militarily in the Persian Gulf.

In spite of this energy subsidy, U.S. productivity, measured by per-capita GDP, by 1988 was fourth among the world's 22 most industrialized nations. If this trend continues, the United States will drop to thirteenth in world productivity by the year 2030. The fundamental

**Figure 2****US Competitiveness in the International Market**

	1980	1990
Optic Fibers	73%	42%
Conductors	60%	36%
Agricultural machinery	18%	7%
Petroleum dependence	12%	36%

Source: *Newsweek*, April 1, 1991.

reason for this decline in U.S. productivity is that the rate of savings in the United States is half that of its industrial competitors and a quarter that of Japan. The reduction in U.S. savings, moreover, contradicts a basic tenet of neoliberal policy, which holds that a concentration of income allows for an increase in savings and investment. In the U.S., the concentration of income in the hands of the wealthiest top 10% of the population increased by 4% between 1980 and 1990, making that group's share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 27%. In the same decade, however, savings fell from 7% to 4%.

U.S. military spending as a percentage of GDP is four times greater than that of other industrialized countries, while its non-military spending, including infrastructure and social spending, is 45% lower. Maintaining such a high military budget and dedicating two-thirds of all funds to high-level military technology increases the competitive gap in terms of civil technology, particularly with Japan and Germany, which do not have such high spending levels for military technology.

The United States' loss of international competitiveness is also notable. Figure 2 shows an almost 50% decline for the key areas of U.S. technology in the same decade that its petroleum dependency tripled. In 1990, the United States held a technological lead in only a few areas, primarily biotechnology and industrial design.

This loss of competitiveness corresponds to a reduction in the investment rate, funds dedicated to research, productivity, and infrastructure, and even in the loss of its own internal market, which shows a growing propensity for imports. The U.S. consumer is losing confidence in U.S. products, particularly vis-à-vis Japanese and European design and technology. U.S. consumer confidence in domestic products has dropped 54% since 1980, which has begun to have international repercussions. In 1990, Japan withdrew more than \$30 billion from the U.S. market.

This analysis could be expanded with other data illustrating the irrevocable need for a structural adjustment in the U.S. economy. The topic has touched off sharp debates in Congress, and even President

Bush had to break his key campaign promise to not raise taxes. The fact is that the United States needs an adjustment even stricter than those imposed in Latin America. Furthermore, the distortions in the U.S. economy have multiple effects on world financial markets, interest rates, stock market fluctuations, and speculation. The international institutions established to guarantee world financial stability, however, are unable to deal with one of the most fundamental distortions of the modern economy.

For Latin America, having a neighbor and key market in a structural recession and with imbalances as great as those outlined above means having a permanently destabilizing factor in its own economies. The Bush plan cannot be analyzed independent of the economy's need for a readjustment and the urgency of increasing U.S. geoeconomic competitiveness vis-à-vis the mega-markets of Europe and Japan.

Those Latin Americans who believe that the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative could serve as an element of growth and stability much like the motor force of growth that the U.S. economy was in the 1960s, when the United States was the world leader in technology, investment, and productivity, need to rethink their relation with the United States in this context. The U.S. military monopoly, coupled with the multipolar economic situation, does not lead to stability. As Professor Paul Kennedy maintains, empires in decline tend to be more militarily aggressive to compensate for their economic weakness.

### **Three Alternatives to the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative**

1) Negotiate better terms with the United States to overcome the lack of reciprocity and the asymmetry that the SELA analysis so clearly shows. This position assumes as a given that the Initiative is the only way out of Latin America's economic crisis.

2) Strengthen the mechanisms of subregional integration in Latin America, integrating the continent through subregional common markets (Merco-Sur, Andean Pact, Central America-Caribbean, with a special relation with Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela). This integration would permit the complementarity necessary to deal with the U.S. and Canadian markets. This second alternative seeks to obtain more positive results for Latin America from the Initiative by diversifying its linkage to the United States through its own integration and by opening new relations with Europe and the Pacific nations.

3) Put forth an alternative vision and proposal for Latin American society. The thrust of this proposal would be to resolve the causes of the economic crisis and respond to the accumulated demands of emerging civil society. It would seek to create the material base for maintaining and deepening participatory democracy. This alternative springs from a vision of society that has been called "the logic of the majority" and aims to overcome the historical exploitation of work, nature, and sovereignty. The crisis of civilization dehumanizes both victors and vanquished in the market and thus calls for a reconstitution of equity and symmetry, both necessary to an authentically free market.

This alternative offers a medium- to long-term solution that reinforces the Latin American vision of the second proposal. For the 1990s, the most viable route is to advance and deepen Latin American integration and diversification in a context of reciprocity and symmetry. Bold pragmatism, however, requires having a vision of a society that goes beyond strict market mechanisms. The Latin American agenda must not reduce itself to the agenda of the United States.

This third alternative implies some strategic priorities.

1) Develop a strategy of survival and appropriate technology based on the accumulated experience of the popular Latin American economies in which the majority of the population is barely surviving.

2) Make significant investments in human capital, converting the poor into productive agents so that they can overcome their poverty. In classical terms this would be what Adam Smith called the "wealth of nations."

3) Recognize local production as the economic arena of the great majority of Latin Americans, which should be integrated into the internal market and expanded to subregional projects in order to guarantee food self-sufficiency and competitive exports for the popular sectors.

4) Selectively connect with the international market, rather than provide an absolute opening. This is important until such time as conditions of greater symmetry and competitiveness can be achieved.

5) Design special policies for the informal sector, both urban and peasant, that would allow for the creation of an internal market with enough demand to stimulate both agro-industrialization and manufacturing. Without the incorporation of the informal sectors, national industry will be elitist and totally dependent on its transnational counterpart. This requires regionalizing this proposal throughout Latin America.

6) Make the state—that ambiguous, yet initially essential, entity—increasingly unnecessary as the transition to civil society is effected. State power should be decentralized to civil institutions. Use the state to create

the social framework that would strengthen the growth of popular organizations and increase their negotiating capacity at both the regional and international levels.

7) Internationalize the work, technology, institutions, and financing of popular organizations required by the transnationalization of capital in the world market. Such internationalization is aimed at democratizing the market at a national, Latin American, and international level.

The popular alternative starts from the premise that a monopolistic market produces an asymmetrical "economic Darwinism" in which state equilibrium disappears, given that the market progressively substitutes for the state and the weakest are absorbed by capital concentration.

8) Democratize the international institutions, in particular the International Monetary Fund and the International Development Bank. This democratization is key to establishing equity in international relations. Like the United Nations, these institutions emerged during the Cold War and respond to the interests of the North. The international network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could play an important role in opening a space for representation of the South. An analysis of the Mexican and Canadian experiences could be very instructive for the rest of Latin America. Initial evaluations indicate that the "fast track"—rapid negotiation—is not permitting Mexico to negotiate in equitable, reciprocal, or symmetrical conditions. Moreover, Mexico's free trade agreement is essentially an agreement of free investment with full supranational guarantees. In other words, trade is not subject to any legal changes that could take place in Mexico in the future. This avoids controls in both the United States and Mexico, while the cheap and abundant Mexican labor force reduces the negotiating capacity of its U.S. counterpart.

The social pact that permitted political stability in Mexico after its revolution has been broken with the latest electoral fraud that brought Salinas de Gortari to power. His policies have meant a drastic reduction in salaries—from 40% of the GDP in 1976 to 23% in 1990. Super-exploitation of labor, natural resources, and sovereignty, all in the context of a so-called free market, could soon be the rule throughout the continent if the balance proposed in the second and third alternatives is not achieved.

## **The Revolution of Civil Society**

The ungovernability that will likely continue to characterize the 1990s implies the lack of a material base for the emergence of civil society through the innumerable organizational forms of the masses and the

emergence of new historical subjects. The dominant characteristics of this new civil society have been hidden by the economic realities of the "lost decade" and the cynical proclamation of the "end of history."

The majority of Latin American societies are qualitatively different in the 1990s. They have overcome the old oligarchic, dictatorial, and military models. A broad demilitarization process is underway, even in areas of great conflict, such as Central America. In most of Latin America, the military is being progressively subordinated to civil society. In the face of pressures from civil society, authoritarian governments and military dictatorships have opened up to electoral processes and democracies, although these are still supervised and restricted. Nevertheless, submissive and asymmetrical stagnation, dependence, and transnationalized insertion are the legacy of the 1980s. The harvest of the 1980s also clears up any ambiguity about foreign cooperation and the international market as motors of growth and development.

In very telescopic fashion, we describe below some elements evolving in civil society. This takes us into the realm of hypotheses and suggestions, some provocative, which call for creativity and political honesty. If the proposals are not painful, there will be no solution to the crisis.

**Fiscal crisis and state disintegration.** The debt, adjustment plans, and generalized economic recession have weakened and in many countries (including Peru, Argentina, Haiti, and Panama) completely destroyed the state's regulatory capacity. In its role as economic promoter and regulator, the state has become a factor of economic deregulation. The indiscriminate opening to the international market has provoked what has been characterized as transnationalized, submissive, and asymmetrical insertion.

**Emergence of new popular movements.** These are the products of increasing impoverishment, social polarization, and the weakening of traditional political parties, both of the Right and the Left. The struggle for survival has spurred reorganization in both the informal sector and the peasantry. Neither the state nor the political parties offer channels of action for this emerging social phenomenon, since neither comprehend it theoretically or in practical terms. The Lavalas movement that brought Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power in Haiti symbolizes such popular forces.

**The coming together of a new Latin American Left.** In many senses, this left is returning to the historic vision shared by Latin Americans from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including Martí, Mariátegui, Haya de la Torre, Sandino, Zapata, Recabarren, and others.

This also corresponds to what was being synthesized in the same era by Gramsci. Undoubtedly, this new Left has been affected by both the crisis of socialism in the East and the stagnation of the Latin American Left. Again today, alongside the confusion and initial loss of spirit, a strong and creative movement is restating the issues and demands in a new historic framework, making way for what has been called "socialism of the majority," "creole socialism," and "Third World socialism"—all of them part of a search for socialism within civil society. Lula's Workers' Party in Brazil and Cárdenas—more specifically than his Party of the Democratic Revolution itself—in Mexico reflect similar dynamics. Lula, Aristide, and Cárdenas symbolize this phenomenon, which also has peculiar expressions in Colombia's M-19 and Uruguay's United Front. The profound political restructuring of El Salvador's FMLN and Nicaragua's FSLN in their revolutionary processes would seem to indicate the existence of a conscious awareness of this phenomenon, which implies new understanding of the tasks of the party in relation to civil society, the state, and the armed forces.

In the innumerable encounters that have taken place among these new emerging forces, there are some fundamental points of agreement. This common profile permits a clear insight into the character of this new political leadership that is filling the void left by the traditional and neotraditional parties across the political spectrum.

**The radicalizing nature of democracy as culture, method, style, and political project.** For the first time, the Left has taken up democracy as a banner of struggle interwoven with the rest of its demands. The goal is to bring participatory democracy to all levels of society, respecting the independence and autonomy of different movements and transforming the top-down styles and ideological rigidity that characterized past actions.

**A new political language.** "Forbidden to forbid" was Lula's slogan at the Workers' Party Congress. "A President in the opposition" was Aristide's pledge to the peasant movement in Haiti. These are only a few indications of a new language accompanied by a new pedagogy that respects popular rhythms and consciousness.

There is a rejection of the Left's political language, as there is of the oligarchic language Vargas Llosa used in his campaign. Collor de Mello, Fujimori, and Menem himself have tried to create a new language, ultimately failing since they did not also change the content.

It is important to make reference here to the massive invasion of the fundamentalist evangelical movement in Latin America. The "sects" indicate the need to take stock of liberation theology itself, along with

the pedagogy and practice used in the Christian base communities, in the face of these expressions of popular religiosity that have become escapist movements and serve as a political base for the rightwing. The advance of the fundamentalist evangelical movement points to a serious weakness and even a certain failure on the part of liberation theology. It is clear that funding for these movements comes from the United States and that the CIA has politically infiltrated them. Nevertheless, popular religiosity, in which the culture and consciousness of the impoverished masses is primarily expressed, was never taken up adequately by liberation theology. Its theological discourse was excessively abstract, theoretical, and politicized. In addition, it did not leave sufficient space for celebration, for joy, for letting go, for the spontaneous participation of a people exhausted by the struggle for survival.

**New, not exclusively economic, demands.** These demands seek a new project of society, new values, and a new civilization. They come essentially from the new historical subjects—women, indigenous peoples, youth—as well as from growing awareness of the deepening ecological crisis. The topics of “gender” and “political machismo” open great potential for rectification, creativity, and popular mobilization. The demands of women and of different ethnic groups, as well as those calling for environmental protection, are the most radical, alternative, and international ones. The technological and neoliberal paradigm is weaponless against these demands, which have long been a challenge either rejected or given short shrift by the traditional Left.

**New *concertación* and new alliances.** The change in the correlation of forces within each country, resulting from the prolongation and extent of the crisis, is leading to unprecedented rapprochements between some sectors of society. At the same time, society’s most extreme and ideologized groups are being polarized. *Concertación*, which at first glance could be seen as a centrist position, a third way, is an ambiguous and fluctuating movement. It has components of exhaustion and confusion, as well as of aspirations and demands unsatisfied by politicians from either the Right or the Left. It is not a third way that denies the Right and Left; it is a search for consensus, for a common denominator that would permit a national project hegemonized by the popular majorities.

The economic *concertación* taking place in most Latin American countries has pushed ideology and even medium-term political interests off to one side, seeking instead stability and security. “Politics is the art of the possible,” declared one of the more lucid modern thinkers. Politics in the 1990s needs this art, not in order to renounce values and principles, but rather to deepen and purify them, adapting them to new conditions.



**Non-organized sectors.** Setting up links with these groups is a priority task and one of the most difficult to achieve. The widening of the cultural and political gap between organized groups and the growing unorganized masses demands new styles and leadership. For many among the unorganized, political messages and politicians are increasingly seen as old and worn out. Ethical standards are determinant in the culture of the unorganized. They involve a language with more to say to a culture threatened by desperation and with no hope for the future.

**The crisis of management and the problem of efficiency.** In the era of the technical revolution, efficiency and management are two paradigms of today's world, but they have not been the most outstanding characteristics of the parties and groups with popular objectives. Reversing both the lack of credibility in the Left's efficiency and the mythology of the private sector's efficiency is another of the challenges of this decade.

The crisis in management is also a crisis of the rhythm and speed with which new technologies are imposed. The changes produced by consumer society have put supply in direct communication with demand, at least in the manipulated imagination of media images.

It is also a crisis of the communication media. Brzezinski correctly declared that, in addition to military hegemony, the United States exercises media hegemony, given that four of every five messages or images produced in the world are controlled by the United States.

At the same time, the revolution in management implies the de-ideologization of this science, generally seen as bourgeois. It must be appropriated as a contribution to the socialization of available resources. The efficient and complementary linking of the macro and micro is one of the greatest contributions of technical management and is an economic, political, and even military necessity.

**Negotiation and alliances as political forces.** The end of the East-West conflict and the new "culture of peace and tolerance," after decades of polarized ideological alliances, turn negotiation and alliances into priority instruments, both for co-opting the enemy and for achieving hegemony over the pluralism and diversity of civil society. The ideological alliance that divided the world into two poles has left a void in values for the creation of a new world order. A truly global world requires an alliance of common values able to link together 21st-century civilization. It is an alliance of common material interests in the face of shared threats (ecological crisis, security and disarmament, regional crises, etc.) Without this alliance, imposed political power will determine the future within the very same parameters that have brought us to civilization's current crisis.

## **Popular Agenda for the 1990s**

The 1990s is a complex decade, ushered in with the Sandinista defeat, the growing disintegration of socialism in Eastern Europe, the division of the South exacerbated by the Gulf crisis, and the current incongruencies of the Movement of Nonaligned Nations. Pax Americana implies a defeat for the "wretched of the Earth" and the formation of a new trilateralism coordinated with the Group of Seven.

The United States has overcome "the Vietnam syndrome" with the Persian Gulf victory, and consolidated the already strong coalition in U.S. economic, political, and ideological power circles. The alliance of the three big U.S. lobbies—petroleum, military, and pro-Israel—around the Gulf crisis exceeds in strength the alliance around the Committee on the Present Danger that brought the New Right and Reagan to power. The ideological roots of the Truman Doctrine in the 1940s and the National Security Council's foreign policy formulated in the 1950s (known as NSC 68) have also been strengthened with the Gulf victory. There is even talk of establishing a special alliance between the United States and Japan, which Brzezinski refers to as "Ameripon."

At the same time, the international counterweights are disappearing—first of all in the East, but also in the nonaligned movement and the international organizations. The last is particularly true for the United Nations, which has been virtually paralyzed by the veto power wielded by the five big Cold War powers.

From the perspective of the Southern countries, this avalanche is a threat comparable to 1930s fascism in Europe. Confronting it will require a broad alliance within each country as well as internationally, including with the new historical subjects of the North, who, though minorities, are increasingly conscious that this crisis of civilization affects both North and South.

What is still needed is a rethinking of the global theory of socialism or of non-capitalist alternatives. The long-standing debate about socialism in one country is again demonstrating that it cannot survive, something Lenin realized at the beginning of the century when socialism did not expand throughout Europe. The lack of a global project of change and of an accumulation of forces will make any alternative project in one single country impossible, or at least extraordinarily costly.

**The transnationalization of labor and the South.** International social subjects are sending out calls in different forms, in all parts of the world, through political, religious, union, and NGO forums, and for the first time, they have begun to link up internationally. Examples include

the Japan-Asian People's Plan 21, which brings together hundreds of Japanese and Pacific organizations; the Third World Network; and the Forum for People's Economics, which draws in numerous groups of researchers from the North and South and is working on economic alternatives to neoliberal economies.

The network of NGOs and the South, as well as the political parties that have organized around a "socialism of the future" project that includes, for the first time, diverse tendencies from the European left (communists, Trotskyists, socialists—the "casa comun of socialism") originated in a meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev, Willy Brandt, and Ernest Mandel organized by the Polish philosopher Adam Schaft. This network is trying to put to one side the historical differences within the Left and create an "ecumenical humanism." Although this project has not produced more than a few relatively small ideas with relation to the South, the significance of these examples is the growing tendency toward a transnationalization of non-capitalist alternatives whose dominant logic is that of the majorities.

Be that as it may, there is no room in this new single world for "anti" revolutions; there must be "pro" projects and proposals. Anti-imperialism and non-capitalism should be rethought within the sweeping global changes taking place and within, as well, a culture of peace and democracy, where any form of imperialism loses legitimacy and remains isolated as an "enemy of humanity."

The appropriate context for such an effort, which could well include broad sectors of the North, would be the formulation of an international agenda for the 1990s. This requires beginning a country-by-country process of popular agendas in Latin America to find the cumulative synthesis and consensus in all forums dealing with the problem of the New World Order. What is needed is an assertive and creative attitude, going beyond "protest without proposal" to instead present "the proposals with protest" that need to be put forth now.

## Notes

1. A play on words in Spanish, since the word *cólera* refers both to the epidemic disease now sweeping Latin America and also means rage or extreme anger. Also a reference to Gabriel García Márquez' bestselling novel, *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

# **Glasnost**

## **The New World Order and Post-colonialism in Africa**

***Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui***

The defeat of Nazism in the aftermath of World War II brought about a New World Order. The former Allied Powers, however, now divided by the Cold War, soon split over its purpose, and in particular over the international organization which embodied it—the United Nations. Likewise, the majority of Third World countries disagreed with the developed countries of the North over the goals of the new order. Given these divisions, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991 and the subsequent end of the Cold War are unlikely to produce agreement about the flaws of the present system or a cooperative climate in which to design a post-Cold War order.

For many Western intellectuals and policymakers, the failure of the postwar order was due to the antagonisms of the Cold War. East-West rivalry prevented the West from completely dominating the different organs of the UN. Many in the Third World, however, believe the makers of the new order betrayed their proclaimed universalist ideals of internationalism, interdependence, and national equality by obstructing the full self-determination of former colonies and maintaining their own hegemony through the UN Security Council and other mechanisms of the UN system.

Many in Africa see current Western proposals for a New World Order as predicated on principles which assume the same inequitable power structures. This chapter maintains that hegemonic behavior, the lack of equal participation, and the failure to fully implement self-determination account for the deficiencies in the UN system. It argues that the new storm of democracy sweeping across Africa is not a vindication of Western objectives. Rather, various democracy movements which had long been suppressed by both ideological camps during the Cold War

have benefited from the current transition period. In fact, some of the imperatives of reform in Africa, and in the Third World more generally, conflict with the Western desire to control the new international regime. Such is the case with the call for equal national participation in global affairs. The success of the forthcoming order will depend on the desire of current powers to respect international diversity, cultural pluralism, the equality of national interests, and greater democracy in global decisionmaking. Global security and international peace will be obtained only if the end of the Cold War emboldens decisionmakers, politicians, and theorists to experiment with new intellectual tools and approaches to questions of identity, democracy, pluralism, cooperation, and global responsibility.

### **Globalism, Antagonism, and International Cooperation**

An international order is a juridico-political system defined by the ideals, legal principles, and political norms which organize intercommunal relations. Ideally the juridico-political regime has an internal logic which is consistent with the aspirations of the constituent communities. The latter collectively generate the ideals and principles of the regime. The world envisioned for the post-World War II era was expressed in the 1942 *Declaration by United Nations*: one of independent nations, free of oppression and domination, free to exercise their religions, in dignity and justice, yet collectively committed to maintaining international peace and development.<sup>1</sup>

While the UN Charter does refer to the equality of nations and the right of peoples to self-determination, little was included either to enforce national equality and decolonization, or to mandate multilateral participation on issues of global concern. In fact, during various wartime meetings the Allied Powers had already begun to discuss the postwar global agenda in terms of East-West influence. International security, cooperation, and the rights of less powerful nations, particularly in the developing world, were subordinated to the self-defined "national interests" and "security" of the capitalist and communist blocs.

The Allied Powers divided UN authority between the Security Council (S.C.), the General Assembly (G.A.), and lesser organs. They created a weak G.A. even though that organ represented the majority of nations. According to the UN Charter, its decisions are only non-binding recommendations. In contrast, the principal Allied Powers (the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union) concentrated power

in their own hands by constituting themselves permanent members of the S.C., giving themselves virtual executive power in issues of international security. The permanent members possess veto power<sup>2</sup> over S.C. resolutions, which are binding on all UN members. However, they have repeatedly betrayed their international responsibility by vetoing resolutions that conflict with their national interests.<sup>3</sup>

Ironically, however, the veto power prevented the Cold War adversaries from making an international order solely responsive to the requirements of their respective political economies. In fact, each rival power had the procedural instruments with which to block any international process too favorable to the other. The stalemate caused by the veto was the most significant obstacle to their hegemony.

The end of the Cold War has brought about a realignment within the Security Council which assures Western powers of the cooperation of the Soviet Union (now Russia) during international conflicts or crises. The willingness of Russia and other permanent members to work together under a unified Western leadership during international conflicts was demonstrated during the Persian Gulf crisis.

## **Self-determination and Hegemony in the Old New Order**

While the Cold War's end has suppressed the ideological rivalry which in the past atrophied the Security Council, it has not altered imperialism, particularly toward the formerly colonized. In the 1950s, many Africans were encouraged by the UN Charter's promises. They agitated for national independence, the restructuring of international relations, and for new international norms which respected identity and equal participation in decisionmaking. The nationalists requested fundamental concessions from the makers of the postwar world order, their former colonial masters. These concessions included the fulfillment of the promise to build a world free from discrimination and racial oppression.

Many in Africa thought that the postwar order would usher in a political and cultural renaissance. In their enthusiasm for a new order, African and other Third World elites envisioned new juridical propositions that would confirm interdependence and cooperation. A hierarchical order dominated by a few powers was inconsistent with the spirit they envisioned of self-determination, equal rights, and equal protection from hunger, disease, and illiteracy.

African and other Third World leaders also fought to preserve their national assets and natural resources. They demanded negotiated pricing

mechanisms in a more equitable international economic order. It was in this context that the debates over the New International Economic Order and the Law of the Sea took place. African and Third World enthusiasm was short-lived. The formerly colonized were excluded from most postwar international discussions. The similarities between the old and the new order became apparent to the majority of then colonial peoples as the postwar order emerged and the mechanisms of international law were set in motion. Africans who petitioned the Security Council or the UN's Trusteeship Council discovered the inequities inherent in their procedures. They realized that the juridical questions and legal concerns most crucial to their cultural and political affirmation had been muted by assumptions and procedures that had little bearing on their own individual or collective experiences.

One such issue was the validity of agreements entered into by African officials who had been appointed during the colonial era. The colonial powers who controlled the UN privileged Western traditions of state succession over African ones, obscuring the fact that colonial officials had often transgressed African customs and rules in making official appointments. The permanent members of the Security Council paid little attention to questions of the damages due to individuals and collectivities as a result of colonial exploitation. For instance, the expropriation of lands in South West Africa, Tanganyika, the Cameroons, Togo, and Algeria was disregarded, although petitioners justified their claims with Western notions of torts and compensation.

The colonial powers used their domination of the UN to exclude such African concerns as the debt incurred by colonial powers; the rights to resources beyond the boundaries of nation-states, whether on the sea bed, in the air, or in space, and the right to bear arms in self-defense or for national liberation.

Western imperialism and hegemony have been the targets of African intellectuals, who have viewed them as the main obstacles to their self-determination. For this reason, African nationalists are generally disregarded in official Western discourse. In fact, such discourse rarely refers to Western obstructions and rejections of alternative proposals for a New World Order. Likewise, little is said in professional circles about the consequences of direct Western involvement in manipulating the processes of decolonization and their role in post-independence destabilization. Yet, the manipulation or obstruction of popular will and the elimination of unwanted potential—or even elected—leaders produced grave consequences for African politics. By the end of the first decade of independence, only three kinds of leaders had been able to survive

in Africa: the shrewdest, those who survived political intrigues (Gamal Abdel Nasser, Sekou Toure, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda); the collaborators, those who opted for neo-colonial solutions (Leopold Sedar Senghor, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, Jomo Kenyatta, etc.); and the coup-makers, who took their cues from foreign intelligence services (Mobutu Sese Seko, Gnassingbe Eyadema, Jean Bedel Bokassa).

## Cold War Attitudes for a Post-Cold War Era

The mindset that dominated the Cold War era remains central to the proponents of today's New World Order. Throughout the postwar era, policymakers used anticommunist rhetoric to obscure their political and ideological hostility to any breach in Western hegemony—in particular, challenges to the intellectual codes that guided international relations. These politicians, scholars, and other professionals justified their resistance to national independence, as well as their support for wars of destabilization and political interference in Third World countries, by pointing to the ongoing struggle against communism.

However, the intellectual propositions and scientific traditions used to justify Western superiority and hegemony transcend the Cold War. Throughout the imperialist era, social scientists and politicians helped popularize many racial myths and stereotypes in order to justify official hostility to African self-determination and full participation in international relations. The result has been continued Western interference in Africa and other parts of the Third World, and the absence of necessary dialogue toward the restructuring of international relations.

Consider these propositions which recently appeared in the *International Herald Tribune*, "Why is Africa Overwhelmed While East Asia Overcomes?" in which Keith B. Richburg quotes various authorities on the present African crisis. Pauline Baker of the Aspen Institute attributes "Africa's poor record of economic development" to a combination of "bad luck, bad environment, bad policy, bad government and bad faith." She then adds that various African cultures are incompatible with economic progress. Richburg also insists that Africa has produced bad managers, "dictators, tyrants and buffoons," who have run their countries' economies to the ground. This view is supported by Herman J. Cohen, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Cohen states that East Asia, in contrast to Africa, "did all the right things."

Typically, the dominant Africanist discourse in the West is grounded in half-truths. It not only downplays the external factors of the African crisis, it also fails to recognize the specificities of African struggle



for political and economic reforms. Most specialists ignore African, and Third World, demands for a restructuring of the international order, in particular for greater collective participation in determining the global political and economic agenda.

The single-party system dominated African politics during the first two decades of independence; the dominant ideology was that multi-party competition was not suitable to African countries, which regrouped disparate ethnic populations. It was believed that the primary task of African leaders was to build new nations based on common cultural and political grounds. The 1963 military coup in Togo and the Nigerian civil war of the 1960s and '70s provided evidence that fledgling African democracies were indeed vulnerable to political and ethnic factionalism. In response to the perceived dangers of destabilization, academics and politicians alike proposed development schemes that stressed national unity, political integration, and a significant managerial role for the state. African states were to become the primary agents of development, which would lead to a high degree of centralization. Besides drafting investment codes and trade and banking laws, governments were to build schools and hospitals, bridges and soccer fields. Each African state was expected to distribute the spoils of independence to its constituent groups.

African leaders themselves viewed the single-party state as the answer to the evils of fragmentation inherent in multiparty or multi-ethnic competitions. They perceived authoritarian rule and absolute power to be prerequisites for effective management and stability. They implemented single-party systems—with disappointing results. Out of centralization grew clientism, favoritism, nepotism, and corruption. In nearly all African countries, economic centralization and political repression coexisted. No sooner did African countries become independent than heads of state and government began to use national unity as a pretext for stamping out criticism and opposition.

From the mid-1970s, Africa began a serious economic decline that undermined the capacity of single-party states to deliver the prosperity they had promised. The middle classes, consisting of the urban elite, small businesspeople, intellectuals, and wealthy farmers, began to demand political and economic reforms, in particular the restoration of civil liberties. These demands were also supported by militant students and trade unionists. Not surprisingly, authoritarian and autocratic rulers of all ideological persuasions were unable to satisfy these demands. Instead, they responded with intensified repression, interdiction of political opposition, and increased human rights abuses. The persistent suppression

of political protest was ignored by the wider international community during this era of Cold War posturing, as each bloc sought to justify the repressive actions—and crimes—of its despotic clients.

The economic situation worsened in the 1980s, reaching crisis proportions. Many African countries, even those that grew moderately during the 1970s, were saddled with debts they were unable to repay. More significantly, few were able to find funds to invest in production. In this growing crisis, social services, such as healthcare and education, suffered the most severe cuts. The crisis was compounded because lender countries and international financial institutions were preoccupied with their own financial health. Their own problems led the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to mandate economic restructuring and austerity measures so Africans could repay their debts. Governments were obligated to freeze hiring, privatize state-controlled industries, and streamline social and other expenditures. The implementation of these measures created social tensions, not only because the most vulnerable were made to bear the brunt of the austerity cut-backs, but because at the same time government officials failed to curtail their own lavish lifestyles. Labor unions and student groups, specifically, resented the fact that the lay-offs of so-called redundant government employees affected only those who had no patrons in government.

The IMF/World Bank-imposed economic measures combined with the political climate created by events in Eastern Europe to stimulate the current democracy movement. The IMF measures in particular exposed the weaknesses of existing African regimes; the end of the Cold War removed the pretext for internal repression often used by dictators and patriarchs on the one hand, and foreign support for discredited regimes on the other. However, the impacts of IMF conditionalities and Eastern European events on the reform process in Africa should not be exaggerated. For the majority of students in the Cote d'Ivoire and Zaire, or the bulk of workers in Benin, Zambia, and Kenya, or many women in Niger and Nigeria, the most important concern is how to wrest power from the likes of Mussa Traore, Daniel Arap Moi, Mathieu Kerekou, Paul Biya, Gnassingbe Eyadema, civilians and military, friends of the West or the East, who have all failed to submit to popular sovereignty.

## **A Second Independence in Africa**

Today's fervor for decentralization and democracy has enabled African peoples to assert the rights and authority of which they were deprived at independence. At that time, African leaders wrested the reins

of power from the people by means of consultations and negotiations in Paris or London. The majority of Africans were excluded from this process. The negotiations themselves involved the protection of property rights and political privileges which meant little to the majority of Africans. In most African countries, even those where independence was obtained through wars of liberation, there was no real popular consultation concerning national institutions nor negotiation about post-independence priorities. Few African peasants—the majority in all countries—understood the nature of the modern state or their rights in it. Instead, they witnessed the vanishing of their political and civil liberties, the confiscation of their lands, the plundering of their natural resources, and the appropriation by public officials of the public treasury.

The goal of the present democracy movement is to correct that anomaly. Across the continent, the process for achieving this objective has varied. The central African republic of Gabon was one of the first to be struck by popular discontent and the call for change. In 1989, its president, Omar Bongo, was pressured by students and trade unionists into multiparty consultations and an agreement with the opposition to hold the first pluralist national elections to select a new national assembly. The Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and other countries followed suit, holding multiparty elections which gave representation to opposition parties in popularly elected legislative bodies. The most dramatic outcome of multiparty elections to date has been the defeat of the president of the island of Cape Verde, Aristide Pereira, and Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda. Both are uncontested leaders of the nationalist movements which resulted in independence, and both bowed to popular will relatively gracefully.

In Francophone Africa, opposition parties were emboldened by a 1988 declaration by French President Mitterand indicating that he was no longer committed to defending African dictators. At the 1989 Francophone Summit at La Baule, Mitterand went further by tying French aid to democratic reform. No longer afraid of French intervention to maintain former clients, opposition parties in Togo, Benin, Mali, Niger, and the Congo have made radical demands for restructuring society through national conferences, followed by popular referenda to ratify the results.

The national conferences resulted from the realization that political power and authority in the African state had been flawed from the outset. Paternalists and authoritarians, dictators and soldiers had suspended the political rights of the majority; orders rather than negotiation dominated political life; civil society lost its capacity to function independently of

the state; constitutional rights had become meaningless; and political consultation was only an illusion.

The promise of national conferences has brought together many Africans, within truly representative national gatherings, to decide future relations within their states. In the countries where such conferences have taken place, representatives of political parties, various elements of civil society, regional and religious leaders, and the military have drafted new social contracts. In general, the conferences represent the first opportunity that Africans have had to negotiate power, to draw the boundaries of political authority within the state, and to set the priorities of their nations.

The stakes invested in political reform have risen so high that, for the majority of opposition parties, failure is inconceivable. The protesters and reformers have been eager to understand how their own states have been managed. Protesters everywhere in Africa wonder why the restructuring policies and austerity measures forced upon them by the IMF and the World Bank have not included the recovery of the public funds embezzled by Mussa Traore, Hissen Habre, Lansana Conte, and the like, which would relieve them of more than half their debt burden.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Western Solution: Perestroika without Glasnost**

While Africans have come to the conclusion that they need new thinking and restructuring at home, Africanists—especially those who advise on policy—and Western policymakers have not overcome past patterns. Their euphoria over the near-reality of perestroika in Eastern Europe has not contributed to a better understanding of the global international crisis. In the United States, as in Western Europe, scholars, journalists and politicians are observing this phenomenon within old intellectual paradigms. The dominant attitude is that the West won, the communists lost, and Africa should take note.

Indeed, Africans can learn from events in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. However, the lessons should be grounded in their own experiences. For instance, there is abundant evidence that the countries that adopted central planning failed to improve the lot of their peoples. However, those African countries with so-called free market economies did not necessarily succeed. One of the ironies of recent developments in Africa is that the old clients of the West are the most reluctant to implement democracy. The leader of the West African state of Guinea, Lansana Conte, the Cameroonian president, Paul Biya, and the Malawian president Kamuzu Banda, have all resisted opposition calls for

reform. They all fear the propensity of national debates to review past activities—including mismanagement of public funds, human rights abuses, and nepotism—as a prerequisite to a clean beginning.

Unfortunately, the Western response to the reform movement in Africa shows that the ideological and intellectual temperament which marked the Cold War has outlasted it. Western ideologues hostile to African emancipation once represented African demands as “anti-Western”; they now must find new justifications for their blindness to the political and cultural transformation taking root in Africa and elsewhere in the Third World.

The imposition of Western liberal models of democratization on Africa has obscured the experiences of the subjugated masses. Few Western analysts have explored the issues invoked by current African reformers and protesters. In fact, many still reduce democracy to the ballot box and self-determination to majority rule, however manipulated their processes. These intellectual paradigms have caused many unwarranted misgivings about the ongoing struggle in Africa, especially in countries beset by alienation or violence.

In Zimbabwe, for instance, the Lancaster House Agreement that preceded independence in 1980 forced the nationalists to abandon their plans for land redistribution which, coupled with better pricing policy and assistance to the poor, could have helped many peasants move beyond subsistence agriculture. Instead, the mere resignation of the white minority prime minister, Ian Smith, and the advent of majority rule was heralded as a triumph of “Western-style” democracy. When, in early 1990, Zimbabwe was on the verge of a social crisis, few Western scholars were willing to risk an examination of the reasons behind attacks on white farmers who not long before had expropriated ex-combatants’ lands. Such an examination would involve not only a critique of the Lancaster negotiations but also of the deceptive means (including broken promises to finance land redistribution) used by Britain to broker the negotiations between white settlers and African nationalists.

African reformers desire democracy and political transformations, but their history differs from Western or Eastern Europe. Students, the children of destitute and landless freedom fighters in Algeria, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere, have their own indigenous agendas. Political alienation and loss of faith in legal procedures, which fan violence in many countries, reflect inequalities and constraints which were not adequately addressed during and after decolonization. The underlying problems of decolonization have been exacerbated in Southern Africa

by economic disparities and racial injustice, but they are increasingly felt elsewhere in Africa.

The gap between the masses of Africa and Western ideologues and policymakers is even wider with respect to the proposed solutions for the current economic crisis. Recent IMF restructuring policies and their accompanying austerity measures, for example, have been designed by Western experts without the participation of Africans, and implemented without popular consultations. (No wonder military regimes, autocrats and dictators have been most successful at implementing the IMF policies.) The resulting decrease in real living standards and increased poverty and unemployment have compounded the sociopolitical and economic crisis in Africa. In most cases, students and workers under military dictators and authoritarian rulers have reacted with violent disapproval. Popular responses to IMF measures have ranged from violent street demonstrations and university protests, through alternative African-initiated austerity programs, to popular demands for national sacrifice.

Some African leaders understood the need to live within their nations' means long before the IMF intrusion. Thomas Sankara, late president of Burkina Faso, shifted the weight of austerity from the rural masses to the politically powerful and wealthy middle class. Cabinet ministers and other state officials were asked to exchange expensive chauffeur-driven official cars for Renault 4s, to travel fourth class on international airlines, and to save on hotels during official travel.

During the 1991 National Conference in Niger, the participants insisted that African peoples be consulted on major economic policies. Instead of the normally stipulated massive layoffs, conference participants opted for what they termed the "national effort"—a 10% cut in the gross earnings of all public employees—to retain the 10% of the workforce which would have been laid off from the government payroll to reduce the budget in accordance with the demands of international donors. Significantly, the "national effort" avoided the drastic social effects which would have resulted from the standard IMF structural adjustment policies.

Despite such optimistic examples, most Africans are aware of the limits of such efforts in repaying a national debt. They also realize that debt repayment has been a major contributing factor to the general economic decline. In Niger, Togo, Benin, and Mali, participants in the national conferences were divided on the question of foreign debt. Some participants called for debt forgiveness, on both ethical and humanitarian grounds. Others questioned outright the legality or legitimacy of foreign debt. However, both groups supported their governments' efforts at debt

repayment, out of fear of economic, financial, or military reprisal from international powers.

Whether heeded or not, protests continue in Africa over unilateralism in international relations. Perhaps Western journalists, intellectuals, and politicians do not want to hear from the Vaclav Havel of Africa because they have long labeled them "leftists" or anti-Western. France was even reluctant to support the government of Togo when, in the fall of 1991, the military attempted to annul the results of the national conference by staging a coup. The popularly elected government of Joseph Kokou Koffigoh appealed to Mitterand's government for assistance, but to no avail, although France had once sent military troops to support President Eyadema's dictatorship. During the same period, France, the United States, and Belgium, which, in the guise of anti-communism, more than once had rescued Mobutu Sese Seko from his opponents, failed to protect democratic reformers in Zaire when Mobutu suspended the national conference. Western troops moved in to protect their own nationals and stood by as Mobutu's troops massacred civilians. Following the 1991 post-national conference crisis in Togo and the events in Zaire, many African reformers, nationalists, and leftists have begun to wonder whether Western advocacy of democracy includes justice and fundamental political transformations. To the young professionals and students in Mali, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, the Congo, and elsewhere who protested in front of Western embassies on those occasions, the answer to their question is dangerously frightening.

### **Glasnost, Perestroika, and the *New New World Order***

Many African intellectuals view with suspicion the effectiveness with which Western powers worked through the UN to attain their Gulf War objectives. Africans and other Third World proponents of a progressive new order argue that any reappraisal of the international system intended to bring about international stability will have to involve a rethinking of the conflicts and dynamics between the North/West and South. For many years, liberals and conservatives in the West have attempted to blame the present failures of African countries solely on the mismanagement of the past years, ignoring the effects of centuries of oppression and exploitation.

The economic crisis in Africa has little to do with a lack of traditions of, or experience with, free exchange of goods and skills. Prior to conquest, complex civilizations had long existed in Africa that included traditions of fair exchanges with other parts of the world, including

Europe. Beginning with the slave trade in the 1500s, up until the early 1960s, the form and nature of economic dynamics between Africa and Europe was primarily determined by Europe's desires. In short, Africa's current position in the world economy is Western-made.

The West continues to share responsibility for Africa's problems. Some of the most corrupt leaders of today's Africa were either installed by the former colonial powers or are kept in power by their good offices. Mobutu Sese Seko replaced Patrice Lumumba thanks to U.S. intervention and manipulation of Zaire's post-independence power struggle. Lumumba was a socially conscious nationalist and a parliamentarian who raised sensitive issues relating to independence. He had to be silenced.

Like the Vaclav Havels of today, Lumumba spoke the language of political self-determination and economic empowerment for the majority, but within a different context: one of international hostility and internal uncertainty. This context lent itself to Cold War activism and destabilization of Africa. Patrice Lumumba's case, though the most visible, was not unique. Ruben Um Nyobe, Felix Moumie, Ouezzin Koulibaly, and many others were politically, and physically, eliminated before independence was granted to their respective countries.

The lack of Western support for popular African demands has led to political alienation, violence, and anti-Western sentiments. Thus, to Islamic fundamentalists in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Libya, the harsh economic realities, IMF conditions, and Western support for authoritarian, if not corrupt, leaders or regimes signify an anti-Muslim, anti-Third World "conspiracy." This argument is echoed by disaffected and unemployed youth in African cities.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union has effectively ended the rivalry within the UN Security Council, lifted the veil of international antagonism and mistrust, and liberated human and material resources previously held hostage to an ever more expensive arms race. Ideally, the international system will now be restructured to allow all nations to actively participate in decisions that affect them. To many in the Third World, the end of the Cold War offers a unique opportunity for the establishment of international cooperation. However, skeptics in Africa believe, with some justification, that the new thinking and economic restructuring associated with the New World Order are doomed because these measures are not complemented by reform within the international system.

Many Western policymakers have called for a reactivation of the UN in a manner that increases the policing role of the Security Council. These professionals use language that seems inclusive: international cooperation, peace, and stability. In practice, the New World Order they describe



is one dominated by the West, in which the Security Council, and the UN in general, lends legitimacy to Western interests and hegemony.

One obvious question heard in Nicaragua, Libya, New Caledonia, the West Bank, and elsewhere in the Third World is whether such a restructuring will include a review of the rules of procedure of the Security Council to strengthen its dispositions concerning conflicts of interest. The majority of conflicts, civil wars, and international tensions in the postwar era have directly or indirectly involved the permanent members of the Security Council. Indeed, the permanent members, more than any other countries, have consistently defied the international system and the International Court of Justice.

Empirical consistency and concern for the future of the globe—and the human species—dictate that we link the restructuring of the international system with issues of global concern, at both the national and international levels. While African and other Third World peoples have suffered more from poverty, repression, and exploitation, conditions in the South may soon affect the world at large. Desertification and the disappearance of the rain forest are a threat to us all. The decrease in per capita income first affects Third World peoples but then also Western banks, industries, and other investors. Refugees, whether displaced by war or famine, are cause for global concern. So are epidemic diseases like AIDS.

Not long ago preoccupied with consumption, Westerners have increasingly had to deal with the issues of conservation, waste management, and the efficient use of resources. These issues have taken precedence where production was once the priority. Considering also the threat to the human race and the planet of the spread of nuclear and chemical weapons, many in the West have had to reassess the meaning of global security. Humanity is now faced by a global environmental challenge on a par with the economic crisis.

The post-Cold War order must not be approached with old ways of thinking which combined evolutionism and a racist mentality with arrogance and imperialism. We need to rethink our approaches to global security, peace, and stability. Professionals and scholars must design new fields of study, analytical methods, and intellectual assumptions, as well as reshape their political agenda. What happened in Eastern Europe, and is happening in Africa, should be seized upon as an opportunity to rethink human solidarity and global interdependence. We must not construe recent events as the last chance for selected countries and their dominant classes to perpetuate world domination. We might still save

ourselves from global catastrophe if we apply new thinking to the future course.

## Notes

1. Great Britain, Parliament, *Declaration by United Nations*, Treaty Series No. 5, Commons, Cmnd. 6388, 1942, p.1.
2. United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations and Statutes of the International Court of Justice*, D.I.L-24, Articles 24 and 25; and Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and XII.
3. Ibid., specifically, articles 25-32.
4. Richburg, Keith B., "Why is Africa Overwhelmed While East Asia Overcomes?" *The International Herald Tribune*, 14 July 1992, pp. 1 and 6.
5. N'Diaye, Karamoko, "Retrouve nos sous Zorro!", *Aurore Quotidien* (Mali), 11-18 April 1991, p. 5; Malick Kante, "Les comptes bancaires à l'étranger des anciens dignitaires ont été bloqués," *L'Essor Quotidien* (Mali), 26 April 1991, p. 3.

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# **Africa and the New World Dis-Order**

*Francis M. Deng*

When the end of the Cold War began to manifest itself in the democratization process in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it seemed to imply that a new and promising era was being ushered onto the global scene. On the other hand, some voices in the Third World began to whisper apprehensively that the end of the Cold War might result in the withdrawal of the superpowers' attention from the concerns of the developing countries. While removing harmful ideological confrontations, such an outcome would also risk marginalizing those countries and deny them the support they needed for building their nations.

What was clearly not anticipated was that the bipolar confrontation of the Cold War would be replaced by the disintegration of the Soviet Union; that Yugoslavia, which had stood as a model of unity in diversity, would fall apart; and that ethnic tensions and conflicts would proliferate in many parts of the world.

Economic liberalization and the introduction of market economies into the former socialist countries, initially hailed as reflecting the victory of capitalism over communism or socialism, seems, at least in the initial phases, not to have brought the instant prosperity which the peoples of these nations clearly aspired to and expected. On the contrary, both productivity and equitable distribution, even of essential commodities, have been severely curtailed, resulting in humanitarian disasters.

The Gulf War was another dramatic episode that signaled a transformation in the international system in which the West, and more specifically the United States, emerged as the dominant actor. The United States mobilized the international community, not only to free Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, but also to override Iraqi sovereignty to protect the Kurds and ensure their welfare, albeit temporarily. Statements of President George Bush about the emergence of a New World

Order and the leadership role of the United States in that new, largely undefined, order stimulated speculation and creativity as to what might ensue.

Much of what has since ensued indicates that the new order is by no means uniformly orderly, but it has certainly created an atmosphere for rethinking arrangements that had been taken for granted as almost sacrosanct. One of the most conspicuous areas requiring rethinking is the notion of sovereignty within the international borders as defined by the old order. Two contradictory trends toward enlarged unity and fragmentation seem to be occurring concurrently: progress toward European unity illustrates the first, while the developments in the successor states of the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Ethiopia dramatize the second. These two models would seem to suggest that in this new order, those who have been oppressed by the concentrated power of the centralized system of the nation-state are asserting the need for self-determination, while those already free are choosing to modify sovereignty and move toward larger cooperative frameworks.

Nowhere is the tension between the opposing trends of unity and autonomy or independence as pressing as it is in Africa, where the colonial borders have been perceived as both artificial and sacrosanct. The signal from the developments at the international level is that old assumptions are now under severe scrutiny, to say the least, and Ethiopia, which appears set to give its ethnic groups the right of self-determination, may well prove to be a test case for the future. The time seems ripe for revisiting the colonial borders which were artificially drawn on the map by European powers some 100 years ago.

## **The Constraints of the Old Order**

During the Cold War, the debate on conflicts around the world, and especially in Africa, centered on whether they were internally rooted or provoked by the ideological rivalry between the superpowers. The question was critical to how those conflicts should be addressed and managed. If the causes were internal, then remedies had to be sought internally. If they were related to the superpowers' rivalry, then not only had the solutions to be sought through them, but their support for their allies was a given. The debate generally dichotomized positions between those who welcomed and even sought external intervention as necessary and those who resisted it as an undesirable complication and aggravation of internal or regional conflicts.

The fear that the end of the Cold War would result in the major powers withdrawing their attention from Third World concerns has been borne out. This has decidedly removed the external factor and placed African problems in the regional and the national contexts. Causes and effects are now increasingly recognized as primarily internal, a development which has both positive and negative implications.

Previously, Africa was hooked to the global structures and processes, first by colonial intervention and then by ideological linkages into a chain of interdependency. The end of the Cold War meant de-linkage in varying degrees, which is making self-reliance increasingly imperative. This applies not only to governance, especially the resolution or management of conflicts, but also to development. However, having been dislodged from the context of indigenous values and institutions as resources for self-enhancement from within, Africans are left hanging between the local and the global systems.

The crisis of this development is manifesting itself in the devastating conflicts which no longer seem to draw world attention as they might have done in the past. The decolonization of Namibia, the process of dismantling apartheid in South Africa, and the peace process in Angola were all undertaken at a time when the Cold War was being replaced by cooperation between the superpowers in the management of ideologically polarizing conflicts around the world. In sharp contrast to the world attention those situations received are the cases of Liberia, Ethiopia, and until recently, Somalia. The worst scenarios are those in Mozambique and Sudan.

The only African issues in which the world still manifests interest are the unfolding developments in South Africa and the humanitarian assistance, often in the form of famine relief for the starving masses, in drought-stricken and war-ravaged countries. And of course the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank adjustment programs keep the continent tied to the dictates of the international financial and economic system. Otherwise, the challenge for Africa is to go beyond the empty slogans and give meaning to true independence through genuine self-reliance.

Africans are reacting to the situation in a pragmatic way that points at two seemingly contradictory, but in fact complementary, lines of action. First, they are recognizing that the world does not care much about them and that they must take their destinies into their own hands. At the same time, the imperatives of global interdependence propel them to resist marginalization. Putting the two together, the operative

formula is for the Africans first to put their houses in order and then to get back to the international scene with a renewed sense of legitimacy.

In reality, these moves are not sequential but concurrent. Recent years have witnessed a wave of earnest self-criticism in Africa among the intellectuals and even incumbent political leaders. The promotion of democracy and human rights has become a high priority in the African debate. The Organization of African Unity Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the so-called Banjul Charter, was a major accomplishment in this process. The Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), the so-called Helsinki process for Africa, initiated by General Olusegun Obasanjo's African Leadership Forum, endorsed by the Kampalla Conference in 1991, and now under consideration by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), is one of the manifestations of this process of self-criticism and the search for practical ways of advancing the cause of security, democracy, human dignity, and development. Envisaged in the process is the creation of an African Council of Elders, comprising mostly former heads of state and government who have retired respectably and can continue to offer leadership beyond power. Among other functions, they are expected to help mediate between parties to domestic and regional conflicts and promote the cause of peace and security in the continent.

The Organization of African Unity has also reorganized its institutional arrangements to be more effective in conflict resolution and the promotion of peace and security, both domestically and regionally. In addition to reactivating the dormant Commission on Mediation, Arbitration, and Conciliation envisaged in the OAU Charter, the secretary-general has recently established a conflict resolution unit in the Secretariat.

Africa's resistance to marginalization at the international level is likely to benefit from the reforms now being undertaken to promote democracy, human rights, and the liberalization of the economies.

## **The Challenges of the New Order**

There is now no doubt that African problems, whether they relate to conflict management or socio-economic development, must be approached from the perspective of the local, regional, and national contexts. This should entail a close analysis of the root causes of conflict, appropriate arrangements and strategies for conflict resolution, protec-

tion of human rights, promotion of democracy, and the realization of sustainable development.

Politically, the starting point, as in most matters pertaining to Africa, has to be the colonial nation-state and its unification of the diversities which it paradoxically kept separate and unintegrated. Ethnic groups were broken up and affiliated with others within the artificial borders of the new state system. While the colonial masters were the third-party moderators of ethnic co-existence and interaction, they imposed a superstructure of law and order that maintained relative peace and tranquility.

The independence movement was a collective struggle for self-determination that reinforced the notion of unity within the artificial framework of the newly established nation. Indeed, independence came as a gross national product that did not initially disaggregate who was to get what from the legacy of centralized power and wealth. And indeed, colonial structures and processes of control had divested the local communities and ethnic groups of much of their indigenous autonomy and sustainable livelihood and replaced them with a degree of centralized authority and dependency on the welfare-state system. Once the control of these centralized institutions and sources of survival passed on to the nationals at independence, the struggle for central control became unavoidable, especially as the colonial system had been stratified along ethnic and regional lines. The inevitable outcome was conflict over power, wealth, and developmental opportunities. These conflicts invariably led to gross violations of human rights, denial of civil liberties, disruption of economic and social life, and consequential frustration of development.

Given the Cold War conditions that pervaded the international system, these conflicts were not perceived in the domestic context of competition for power and resources, but rather as extensions of the superpower ideological confrontation by proxy. Rather than help resolve them peacefully, the rival ideological camps only added fuel by providing military and economic assistance to their allies or satellites.

While the end of the Cold War has removed this aggravating external factor, it has also removed the moderating role of the superpowers, both as third parties and mutually neutralizing allies. As Liberia, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mozambique, and Sudan illustrate, the results have been unmitigated brutalities and devastations.

It can credibly be argued that the gist of these internal conflicts is that the ethnic pieces that were welded and kept together by the



colonial glue, reinforced by the old world order, are now pulling apart and reasserting their autonomy or independence.

The objective of self-determination, which had triggered the independence movement but had been interrupted by the constraints of sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the colonial borders, now appears to have been resumed with vigor and vengeance. Old identities that were undermined and rendered dormant by the structures, values, and institutions of the nation-state system are reemerging and redefining the standards of participation, distribution, and legitimacy. In fact, it may be even more accurate to say that the process has been going on in a variety of ways within the context of the constraints imposed by the nation-state system.

From the dawn of African independence, such slogans as Senghor's Negritude, Nkrumah's *Consciencism*, Kenyatta's *Uburu*, Nyerere's *Ujamaa*, Mobutu's *Authenticité*, and Kaunda's Humanism have symbolized African leaders' search for cultural legitimation of their political and economic objectives and strategies. Oftentimes, they were rationalizations for preconceived ideas and practices that were adopted from foreign prototypes and dressed up in local garbs, but they nonetheless expressed a genuine yearning for building on the culture of the people.

With the end of the Cold War, this trend is acquiring a rebirth with a deeper sense of the real world which verbalism or empty slogans can no longer manage. Africans are now called upon to find workable solutions to real problems. They must now face the challenges of their immediate problems in the framework of the New World Order.

It is in this context that the revivalist Islamic trend in North Africa and the Middle East should be understood. The movement, at least in the Sudan, developed as a reaction to both colonialism, which promoted Christianity and Western concepts of secular nationhood, and the collaboration of the traditional Muslim leaders with foreign powers. The latter was always a reinforcement of traditionalism and conservatism in a situation which called for radical transformation, that is modernization. A twin movement in this direction, indeed the first to be born, was communism. Not only did both movements have a great deal in common, but they also were first and foremost reactions to the domestic conditions, utilizing ideological linkages to their international dimensions only as tools of management in an interconnected world.

With the demise of communism, first locally in the Sudan after the abortive coup of 1971 which was used to justify a debilitating blow to the Communist Party, and then internationally with the collapse of the

Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Muslim fundamentalists remained the only credible alternative to the traditional political forces that were becoming outmoded. The Muslim Brothers, who politically transformed themselves into the Islamic Charter Front and the National Islamic Front, infiltrated the army and won the support of the officers who took over on January 30, 1989, in the name of the Revolution for National Salvation, with Islamic revivalism as their agenda.

In the Sudan, Islam has been closely associated with Arabism as a composite racial, cultural, and religious identity. Seen in the context of pluralism, however, the challenge that faces the Muslim revivalists is how to reconcile their religious legitimacy and basis of power with diversity and conflicting value systems within the nation and the still interdependent world.

Even among the Muslims, Western values and institutions that have thus far dominated the nation-state system have been adopted and internalized by a sizable portion. The separation of religion and the state is an integral aspect of that system. In the southern part of Sudan, national identity has evolved along indigenous African, Christian Western, and secular lines that contrasts with the Arab-Islamic model of the North. Indeed, the two appear to thrive on their mutual antagonism and struggle for survival. Beyond that, there is the challenge of meeting universally accepted standards of human rights which conflict with the relativist approach of religious and cultural groups to whom these universal standards are foreign, both in terms of the institutional means by which they were defined and their substantive content. This is not to mention the imperatives of the world economic order in which all nations and peoples remain incorporated, even though in some cases only marginally so.

These considerations, however, do not invalidate the quest for cultural legitimization and the need for contextualizing nation-building and the process of self-sustaining development from within the cultural context. The search for workable formulas must consider the conflicting demands for autonomy and equitable unity being made by various groups within the nation-state system. The operative principles in this respect must be autonomy, equity, and justice. But the observance of these principles requires a third party as mediator, moderator, peacemaker, and lawgiver. While regional organizations have a role to play, the most obvious institution called upon to play a pivotal role is the United Nations.

It has to be admitted that once the colonial powers accomplished the brutal task of conquest and pacification, they established a system

of public order and justice that brought peace to inter-ethnic relations which had been afflicted by chronic violence throughout recorded history. This was certainly the case between the Arab Muslim North and the more African South in Sudan. While colonial intervention understandably provoked nationalistic reactions that ultimately culminated in the independence movement, the postulated role for the United Nations aimed at establishing peace, justice, stability, and prosperity has a more compelling and disarming justification. A political, economic, social, and cultural system that autonomously utilizes local resources and resourcefulness within the framework of regional and global interaction and interdependency can be designed to reconcile the lofty ideals of unity with the imperatives of segmentation and fragmentation. As units of participation and social orientation, the family, the clan, and the tribe can indeed be complementary rather than antagonistic to the nation and the global order.

### **The United Nations in the New Order**

Until the Gulf War, the Western perception of the United Nations was that it was a Third World club and a forum for bashing the West, in particular the United States. The Gulf War and its aftermath turned the organization, in the perception of the Third World, into a Western, specifically a U.S., tool for global control.

The United States, more appropriately the president, has not shied away from the role of leadership which the new perception of the organization places on the West, and in particular, the United States. Despite resentment of the inequalities of a system that has hitherto paid lip-service to the principle of equality among member states, the real test is the extent to which the United States lives up to the ideals of political, economic, and moral leadership, whether it operates individually or through the international institutions.

Although states are usually assumed to be motivated by national interests in their bilateral and multilateral policies and strategies, the role of a world leader certainly carries with it burdens that should transcend national interests. There was considerable controversy in the United States about what President Bush meant by a New World Order, what responsibilities he envisaged for the U.S. leadership in that order, and what financial baggage that leadership might entail. The United States will have to be clearer on what the new order means, whether and how the United States will assume the leadership role, what the guiding principles of that leadership will be, and how it will translate itself in

the specific regions of the world where international action is needed to address urgent issues. The former Yugoslavia is an obvious urgent case, but there are many more candidates, and the ultimate objective should be a comprehensively peaceful, just, and orderly world.

## **Conclusion**

If progress is assumed to be an integral part of human development, then the New World Order which is emerging must signify an improvement on the way things have been. The central themes of this improvement must be realizing seemingly contradictory trends, the quest for autonomy and the need for broadening circles of cooperation regionally and internationally. Leadership at the international level must pursue the ideals of freedom, democracy, justice, and prosperity for all nations and peoples throughout the world. World leaders cannot discriminate between their own favored nationals and the marginalized nationals of foreign nations, at least not to the degree of dispossession. Liberating Kuwait must only be defended on universal principles, not for limited national strategic objectives, if the role of the United States as the driving force behind United Nations action is to be viewed as global leadership. The same principle is more glaring in the case of protection for the Kurds in Iraq. This in turn imposes an obligation on the United States and the United Nations to exercise the same responsibility in comparable situations of need for international action.

It goes without saying that the tragic situations in Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and Mozambique cannot be left to local actors when the magnitude of human suffering and destruction to life and property far exceeds what should be tolerable even by minimum standards of human dignity and global responsibility. Otherwise, what we are witnessing is the emergence of a new world disorder.

Over a century ago, the major European powers met at the Berlin Conference and carved the African continent into pieces of real estate in which they extended colonial domination. Perhaps the time has come for another Berlin conference with a different venue, participants, and guiding principles. "Conference" in this context is intended as a metaphor for re-thinking the colonial borders to give greater meaning to self-determination and the principles of democracy and human dignity.

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# **New World Order: Old Arab World Problems**

*Nabla Abdo*

The Gulf War, viewed from a historical perspective, can be seen as the latest in a string of crises which have confronted the Middle East for the last quarter of this century. During the so-called Cold War between the two superpowers, people in the Middle East were experiencing quite hot and bloody wars: from the 1967 war to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and including the 1973 war and the 1979 Iran-Iraq war. This continuous state of war has drained the economies of the countries involved and ensured their continuous dependency on the superpowers, primarily the United States. Instead of channeling funds for human development projects, industrialization, health, and education, many Arab states such as Syria, Egypt, and Iraq were preoccupied with entrenching their regimes and the military-authoritarian nature of their respective states.

The end of the Cold War, crystallized in the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc as an independent power, coupled with the defeat, or rather destruction, of Iraq, has given the United States a particular hegemonic status: a new power with very little, if any, official challenge. It is within this context that the so-called New World Order must be understood.

While the Gulf War was just one driving force in the emergence of the so-called New World Order, the war was unprecedented in the history of humanity because it utilized not only the most advanced technologies in weaponry, but also in communication, mass-control media, and dissemination of information, to effect massive destruction in a relatively short time period. Thus in addition to the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children, women, and men said to have been wiped out during the war, UN and other international agencies continue to estimate child and infant deaths at a rate of 300-400 per day and warn of the environmental catastrophe which has plagued the region (including Iraq, Kuwait, and the poor nations surrounding the Gulf).

In this chapter, I will examine some aspects of change which have affected Arab countries at the global, regional, and local levels. My point of departure will be the event (the Gulf War) and not the ideology (New World Order). The major argument which will be advanced here is that the Gulf War and the New World Order have not invented the new disorder, chaos, regional discrepancies, and the many conflicts and contradictions currently gripping the Arab world. The old order of the Arab world was, in fact, plagued with all sorts of social, economic, ethnic, and gender conflicts prior to the Gulf War. The aftermath of the Gulf War has basically intensified and speeded up Arab disorder by exposing most Arab regimes and state policies. To carry through this argument, I will look at regional conflicts in the Arab world and examine the relationship between Arab states and their citizenries. The last segment of this article will focus on the special position of the Palestinians and the peculiar room prepared for them in the New World Order. Emphasis in this last segment will be placed on the role and position of Arab Palestinian women.

### **Old Problems in a New Form**

One of the major debates which arose during the Gulf War has focused on the nature of the "alliance" between Arab countries, primarily Egypt and Syria, and the United States. While for some such an alliance was viewed as just a temporary tactical maneuver, others have seen it as a dramatic new shift in Arab states' policies. Those who argued that the changes were tactical pointed to the financial incentives which both countries were offered, such as the cancellation of Egypt's foreign debts by the United States, and financial aid and some other promised rewards to Syria for negotiating with Israel about the return of the Golan Heights.

The other camp, which viewed these policies as "new shifts," has focused on the consequences for "Arab unity," arguing that these policies will create or accelerate divisions within the Arab world. One area where a rift was seen as imminent was between the Maghreb—notably Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Libya, and the Masreq—especially Syria, Egypt, and Jordan.<sup>1</sup> These debates, I propose, are superficial in that they fail to address local and regional conflicts and discrepancies already existing in and between the Arab countries. These debates, conducted in the spirit of Arab nationalism, fail to account for the internal class, gender, religious, and ethnic conflicts plaguing most Arab countries. They also ignore the unequal relationship of exchange between large poor countries, such as Egypt, Syria, and Sudan, and the tiny oil-exporting monarchies of the Gulf.

Arab nationalism has long been placed on the back burner in most Arab countries. In fact, various Arab scholars have observed that the defeat of the Arab armies in 1967 by Israel constituted a major blow to the Arab unity project. The end of Nasser's era and the rise of the Sadat regime, which has brought about the *infitah* (or the open door policy), marked the beginning of a new political economy in the Arab world. The coming of Sadat to power, his open alliance with the world capitalist system and the United States in particular, and his signing of the Camp David Accords with Israel eliminated the last glimmer of hope held by Arab nationalists.

Moreover, Egypt's political alliance with the U.S. camp has not guaranteed it economic self-sufficiency, let alone economic independence. Instead, Egypt has been dragged into an IMF and World Bank style of development, incurring heavy foreign debts and distorted development. By the early 1980s, Egypt had turned into the major labor-exporting country in the Arab world. An estimated labor force of over two million Egyptian workers is currently employed in the non-skilled and semi-skilled sectors of the Gulf. One of the calculations of the Mubarak regime during the Gulf War was that if his government did not receive immediate financial rewards it would at least be guaranteed some role in the reconstruction of Kuwait. His calculations, as Haseeb and Rouchdy have pointed out, were misplaced. The overwhelming majority of reconstruction-related projects were controlled by the United States itself, with some smaller projects grabbed by Britain and France, which managed to contact the Kuwaiti government early on.<sup>2</sup>

While the overwhelming problems of Egypt are directly related to the political economy of its state, it is definitely not alone. Structural and regional problems exist in and among all Arab countries. Lebanon, Somalia, Libya, the western Sahara, and Mauritania have all been experiencing active civil wars or border conflicts. Whether these conflicts were manifested in the suppression of the Sunnis by the Alawite regime of Syria, the suppression of the Shia' by Saddam Hussein, or, more importantly, the suppression and massacres against the Kurds by the latter, all these conflicts have had debilitating effects on Arab regional stability.

Viewed from this perspective, one can hardly find a common ground for regional cooperation, let alone unity, among Arab countries. There remains one single issue which for many years has been adopted by almost all Arab states as a common theme, namely the declared aim of liberating Palestine and the Palestinians. While this issue was at the top of the Arab agenda until the Gulf War, history shows that the Palestinian issue was no more than a propaganda card, used by Arab



states in an attempt to deflect popular attention from increasing social, economic, and political hardships. In fact, the 1987 *intifada* has dispelled any remaining illusion about the position of the Arab regimes on the Palestinian issue; in some sense it withdrew their bargaining card.

The primary result of the Gulf War in the Arab world has been to accelerate already existing conflicts, intensify old, yet partly masked, discrepancies, and fuel local and regional contradictions which the state of impasse in the Arab nationalist movement has failed to address. The Gulf War has sanctioned direct contacts between various Arab regimes and the state of Israel, contacts which otherwise would have been made secretly and in private. For example, the recent "Israeli-Egyptian summit" was held in Cairo at the invitation of Mubarak, and a series of meetings between Syrian officials and Israeli Labour Party officials were facilitated by King Hassan of Morocco just prior to the Israeli elections. The recent Syrian-Israeli deal in which the former has agreed to import water pipes manufactured in Israel carries a special weight in regional considerations. Syria, which for the longest time has been claiming to be the champion of Arab nationalism and of the Palestinian people, is not only contradicting its own claims but also exposing the shaky regional treaty signed in 1973, known as the Arab economic boycott of Israel.<sup>3</sup>

### **State and Society in the Arab World: Old Tensions with New Fuel**

Regional conflicts and self-centered interests which have marred all Arab regimes during the past 20 years have largely been responsible for the increasing gap and tensions between states and societies in the Arab world. Tensions that were expressed through mass demonstrations during the Gulf War were not just a response to the war, as some may have thought. Except for the states of Syria and Egypt, which had policed their nations and suppressed popular demonstrations, almost everywhere in the Arab countries masses took to the streets. Arab popular sentiments, revealed during the Gulf War in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, and elsewhere, expressed more than anything else people's frustration and resentment at Arab regimes in general, and their own states' policies in particular.

The three major Arab countries in the Maghreb—Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria—have been crippled for the past decade by worsening economic conditions. To varying degrees all three countries were facing rising unemployment, widespread poverty, "bread uprising," youth demonstrations, women's protests, and most notably a revival of Muslim

fundamentalism, with Algeria being most affected. Algerian social structure has been crippled by the failure of the National Liberation Front's (FLN) one-party rule to implement its economic projects, which led to high rates of unemployment and worsening living conditions among the rural poor, making space for the Islamic Salvation Front (ISF) to emerge as a strong political alternative with considerable mass support. Further tensions were also rising at the gender level, partly due to the attempts of the ISF to turn the country back into a traditional patriarchy with strict religious codes. All these tensions were played out actively in the streets of Algeria prior to the Gulf War. The frequent antiwar demonstrations throughout January 1991, whether organized by Left and opposition groups, the ISF, or women's organizations, were all expressing the deep social, gender, economic, and political conflicts embedded in the Algerian system.

A similar reading can also be made of the popular demonstrations held in Morocco and Tunisia. During the Gulf War much of the concern of Arab states, and of the Maghreb in particular, has not been about Iraq and its destruction as much as about the security of the regimes from the people themselves. In Morocco, for example, despite the "balancing" or rather vacillating position of King Hassan, he could not control the popular resentment and a demonstration by over 300,000 people in the streets of Rabat. Commenting on Morocco during the war, David Seddon observed:

In Morocco, where the Islamic movements had been effectively repressed for the time being, the main concern was the enormous potential for social unrest associated with the unpopular economic reforms of the government and the associated deterioration in living conditions among the mass of the people, which was dramatically revealed when a general strike called by the trade unions in December degenerated into large-scale demonstrations and violent clashes with the security forces in several major cities, giving rise to over 200 deaths and hundreds of arrests.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, as the Algerian women's mass demonstration of January 24, 1991, showed, the enemy of the Arab people was not only "Bush" but "the emirs" as well. The "emirs" in this demonstration symbolized Arab popular resentment of the policies and lavish lifestyles which the Gulf sheiks and emirs have been practicing while millions of Arabs have been perishing from malnutrition, starvation, and ethnic conflicts. Grassroots sentiments against the emirs and sheiks were in fact brought home through the experiences of millions of Arab expatriates (both laborers and professionals) who for the past 20 years have lived and worked in the Gulf states. Commenting on the lavish lifestyle of the

sheiks and emirs, Sayigh has the following to say: "...enough time has passed since the oil-boom of 1973-74 for stories of sexual excesses (whether true or not), spending sprees in Western capitals, and the gambling away of millions of dollars at casinos (even gambling by satellite) to have filtered down to the most illiterate and impoverished in the farthest corners of the Arab world."<sup>5</sup>

Class, gender, and ethnic problems have long characterized the social systems in all Arab countries. These problems were heavily entrenched in Arab regimes whose economic dependence on the world capitalist system has kept them in a perpetual state of debt, while simultaneously strengthening their authoritarian rule. For their regimes to be maintained, Arab rulers realized that the status quo must be preserved and their state machinery must be prioritized over any human development concern, a position welcomed by the U.S. and other Western powers, and especially by big capitalist agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank. It is not surprising, therefore, that most states' budgets get spent on excessive military buildup with very little funding channeled to educational, health, employment, and other programs.

Misallocation or mismanagement of state funds, whether the decisions are made consciously or not, has also characterized oil-producing Arab countries. The United Nations Development Program's *Human Development Report 1990* states that oil-producing countries have "failed to translate their recent wealth into human development." The same report talks about the poor performance of Middle East and North African oil producers, including Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Algeria, and suggests that the life expectancy in these countries is "often no better than the average for the Third World, while the literacy rate is frequently well below the average. The rate of female literacy, in particular is said to be low."<sup>6</sup>

The poor, women, and other ethnic and social groups have been the primary victims of the Arab authoritarian states and of the regional disparities between rich and poor countries within the Arab world. It is these same groups who have been most affected by the Gulf War and who will continue to be marginalized in the new Arab world "order."

### **What Does the Gulf War and its Aftermath Hold for the Palestinians?**

While one cannot prioritize suffering or victimization, one particular Arab national group, namely, the Palestinians, presents a unique case and requires special attention. In this section, we will deal with the

direct and indirect impact of the Gulf War on the Palestinians. The availability of data on the impact on, and role of, Palestinian women will also enable us to provide more gender analysis.

In order to appreciate the real magnitude of the economic impact of the Gulf War on the Palestinians, a brief account of Palestinian economic history under Israeli occupation is necessary. During 25 years of Israeli military occupation, massive land expropriation has taken place.<sup>7</sup> While not all these lands have been successfully settled by Israeli Jews, the impact of this expropriation on the Occupied Territories has been devastating. Masses of proletarians have been created; unable to survive in the territories, they have been forced to sell their labor power in Israel. The Palestinian migrant labor force employed in Israel is estimated at over 150,000 workers. The working and living conditions of these workers, according to many reports, including the recent report by the Israeli human rights activist Israel Shahak, are worse than those experienced under South African apartheid.<sup>8</sup>

The Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been turned into a pool of cheap labor power for the Israeli labor market. This process has been enhanced partly by Israel's water policies, which aimed at diverting the waters from West Bank and Gaza agriculture to newly built Jewish settlements in expropriated land, and partly by Israel's various military regulations, which have restricted Palestinian agriculturists and hampered agricultural production. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Occupied Territories have been turned into an almost fully dependent economy with all the features of underdeveloped dependency: insignificant industrialization, maintenance of labor-intensive agriculture, and insignificant technological development. It is within this context of an underdeveloped dependent society experiencing military rule that one must view the economic impact of the Gulf War on the Occupied Territories.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians found themselves not only jobless, but also forcibly expelled from the Gulf states, particularly from Kuwait.<sup>9</sup> This new Palestinian exodus is a major catastrophe for the people, second only to their expulsion from Palestine after 1948. For many Palestinian families, Kuwait has been a place of residence and work for over 30 years. Palestinians see themselves as major contributors to the development of the economy and infrastructure of some Gulf states, especially Kuwait.

While other Arab expatriates, such as Jordanians and some Egyptians, were expelled from the Gulf, only Palestinians had no state or country of their own to go back to; Palestinians with homes and families

in the Occupied Territories were prevented by Israel from returning. The impact of mass Palestinian expulsion from the Gulf has been comprehensive because of the chain effects it had on other Palestinian families, whose very survival has for many years depended on remittances sent by expatriate family members in the Gulf.

The annual losses of the Palestinians in the form of income and remittances have been estimated between \$1,309.5 million and \$10 billion.<sup>10</sup> The elimination of remittances as a source of income for many Palestinians has been compounded by drastic cuts and the withdrawal of funds from various health, labor, and educational institutions. In addition, the Gulf War and its aftermath have drastically reduced exports from the Occupied Territories to the Gulf states. Particularly affected have been citrus fruits and olive oil. This sector had been instrumental in providing income for many Palestinian agricultural laborers.

The ramifications of these heavy economic losses go beyond their mere impact on individual Palestinians. Palestinian employment has been experiencing further hardships with the immigration between 1991 and 1992 of over 400,000 Soviet Jews to Israel. Unable to find jobs in their professions—most Soviet immigrants came as professionals—Soviet Jews were ready to accept any menial, unskilled, or semi-skilled job available. The employment of Soviet settlers thus came in large part at the expense of Palestinian migrant labor.

The onus of all these hardships has fallen largely on the shoulders of women and children. Prior to the Gulf War, a number of women's groups and scholars already had warned against the emergence of new and disturbing social phenomena: increased child labor and escalation in school drop-outs, especially among female students, and early and often forced marriage of young women, with the reappearance in some cases of polygamy.<sup>11</sup> Worsening economic conditions as the result of the Gulf War, the inability or lack of interest on the part of Arab states in solving the Palestinian problem, and the unlimited support Israel has been receiving from the United States—including the approval late in 1992 of \$10 billion in loan guarantees for Israel's settler project in the Occupied Territories—will probably intensify these social problems. The real danger here lies in the long-term consequences these social problems might produce.

Unlike expatriate families in other Arab countries, Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza do not easily get to see or unite with their male breadwinners. The phenomenon known as "the feminization of the Arab family" is widespread in the Occupied Territories. Partly due to economic hardships but also for political reasons—currently more

than 13,000 Arab men and young males are held in Israeli prison camps—many families, especially in the refugee camps, are solely supported by women. Whereas, for example, in rural Egypt, women can till the land or work as hired agricultural laborers, such a possibility is not available for camp refugee women.

During the Gulf War a number of democratic and open-minded Palestinians resented what they viewed as U.S. “double standard” policies. Underlying their argument is the belief that the United States has adhered to international law in its war to “liberate Kuwait,” and that consistency in U.S. foreign policy would require it to follow suit in liberating the Palestinians. Yet, as Bishara has rightly observed, the United States neither followed international law, nor did it care about Kuwait’s liberation. Its primary interests have been economic and geopolitical, both of which require a degree of stability in the region.<sup>12</sup>

North American media coverage of the Gulf War was full of ironies, racism, demonization, and dehumanization of Arabs. Yet, most ironic, I believe, has been the media preoccupation with the Palestinians and their responses to the war. The media, while ignoring mass demonstrations in many Arab countries, singled out the Palestinians as the only antiwar and pro-Saddam forces. The irony here is that at no time was the media interested in the well- or rather ill-being of the Palestinians. At no time has it condemned the brutal military regime of Israel, and at no time has it recognized the Palestinians’ long struggle for human dignity and political rights. More importantly, while the media was focusing on Palestinian refugees’ protests in Jordan, it ignored the fact that at the same time more than two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were living under emergency regulations, with a blanket curfew imposed on them for the whole duration of the war.

In fact, outside of the Gulf region, the only people who were living under constant fear during the war were the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories. They feared massive expulsion and massacres like those of 1948; they feared a massive retaliation by Israel when no foreign media were allowed in; they also feared chemical weapons when gas masks were not available for them.<sup>13</sup> Neither Palestinian fears nor their hopes were or are of interest to the United States. On the contrary, the Palestinians have been targeted and singled out because for a long time the Palestinian problem, created by Israel and the Western powers, has been a major stumbling block for full U.S. hegemony in the region.

## The New World Order and Palestinian Independence

The *intifada*, which for the past five years has been able to stand up against Israel, one of the most formidable military powers in the region, is now undergoing some major changes, facing special hardships at both the local-societal and the international level.

Grave economic difficulties, combined with Israel's continuing expansion of settlements and the lack of serious international efforts at finding a just solution to the Palestinian question, are taking their toll on the masses, many of whom are sensing a state of *ihbat* (frustration and hopelessness). Undoubtedly, those most affected by these circumstances are refugees, rural and urban poor, and women. In fieldwork I carried out in the summer of 1990 among female grassroots organizations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the mood of women activists in these organizations was one of hope and optimism, despite the many hardships Palestinians were facing. Women's mass participation in the *intifada* had given them a sense of empowerment and conviction of their ability to effect change in the social, gender, and economic structures of their society. Equally important was women's belief in their ability to combat the rising Islamist movement Hamas.<sup>14</sup>

However, the impasse they now face has altered the mood among many. From a sense of empowerment expressed in terms like "no going back," a large number of activists are currently expressing a sense of *raddah* or going nowhere. The *raddah* among Palestinians is attributed to the development of new factors, social and cultural as well as political and economic. For most Palestinians, the popularity of the *intifada* and the strong national unity they achieved in the initial stages gave them the impression that an immediate political solution was in sight. This feeling was further enhanced by the PLO declaration of the independent Palestinian state and its recognition of the Israeli state. Yet, when the declaration of political independence failed to result in any real solution, a state of *ihbat* began to take its toll among the population.

In the meantime, Israel intensified its campaign of occupation, clamping down on the Palestinians both economically and politically in an attempt to weaken the *intifada* and weaken, if not dismantle, the Unified Leadership. These conditions were evolving, as we have seen above, in an unfavorable international context which saw the demise of political independence for most Arab Middle Eastern countries after the Gulf War. Amidst all these frustrating conditions, fundamentalist Muslim groups began to emerge as an alternative leadership, encouraged at the beginning by the Israeli military. Some of these groups, especially

Hamas, began to launch an aggressive campaign of fundamentalist revival, if not reinvention. As expected, the most vulnerable group for religious fundamentalist activities has been women.

In the Occupied Territories and especially in Gaza, a startling "return" or, more properly, reinvention of Muslim fundamentalist culture, expressed in the veil, religious dress codes, and the "domesticization" of women, began to take hold. Most often women find themselves coerced into adopting the new dress codes and, more importantly, forced out of the public sphere.

Notwithstanding this, it has become clear that Palestinian women have emerged as a major social force to be reckoned with. Their long struggle has accorded them significant recognition both locally and internationally. A major achievement for the women of the *intifada*, one which is not likely to fade out, is the role they have played in politicizing the Israeli women's movement as well as in generating not only sympathy but also solidarity and support among various feminist groups internationally. The formation of a number of Jewish organizations such as Women in Black and Women Against Occupation in Israel, Europe, and various North American cities attests to this.

It is important to realize, however, that, like other social groups and women's organizations in the Middle East and probably globally, the Palestinian women's struggle is dialectically linked to the general environment within which it is placed, and as such will always be undergoing changes and transformations, depending on changes in that environment. What makes their struggle different, however, is that they are part of a national liberation movement and not struggling within the confines of a state as yet. A more credible evaluation of Palestinian women's social status and role will be possible when and if the national liberation movement wins international recognition as a state.

It is this very issue, namely, the future of the Palestinian struggle, which is currently placed at the top of the agenda for the so-called New World Order. While I do not want to speculate on the outcome of the ongoing "peace talks," a couple of observations are in order.

The *intifada* has exposed Israel's real and ugly face of military occupation and unmasked Israel's apartheid and racist system. While these realities have not altered the Likud policies, they appear to have embarrassed the enlightened Zionists of the Labor Party and more so the U.S. government, which wants Israel to appear as the only democracy in the Middle East. Hence, this destabilizing force must be somehow solved or ended. With the September 1991 Madrid Conference, a process of transformation has begun: the diplomatization of the Palestinian



political struggle, or, more properly, the hijacking of the Palestinian struggle.

At this historic juncture, which is characterized by a unipolar system (U.S. hegemony), the balance of power is not likely to favor Palestinian independence. Judging from what has already taken place during the various "talks" or discussions, there is little hope that a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian diaspora will be placed on the international, or rather the U.S., agenda. For example, in the two most important conferences held until now, Palestinians were either entirely absent or their very basic rights were ignored. Thus, in the conferences on refugees held in Ottawa in May 1992, the most important right of Palestinian refugees, namely, the right to return, proclaimed by the UN Security Council resolution 194, has been entirely absent from the negotiations, while earlier on, in the conference on water in Moscow, the Palestinian, Jordanian, and Lebanese delegations, the primary victims of Israel's water policies, were altogether absent.

While for many, the Palestinians are considered the heart of the Middle East conflict, one should not be very surprised if they end up with less than minimum rights. The old formula of self-government and confederation with Jordan, suggested by Israel more than ten years ago, approved by the United States, and at the time rejected by the Palestinians, appears to be back on the U.S. "Peace Talks" agenda. Finally, the New Arab World Order allows enough room for all kinds of speculations, one of which could be that the so-called normalization of Arab-Israeli relations will be pushed ahead, even if that happens at the expense of Palestinian independence as well as at the expense of the Lebanese and Syrians under Israeli occupation. The place of the Palestinians in the New World Order remains to be seen.

## Notes

1. For more on these debates see Dina Haseeb and Malak S. Rouchdy, "Egypt's Speculations in the Gulf Crisis: The Government's Policies and the Opposition Movement," in *The Gulf War and the New World Order*, Bresheeth, Haim, and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., London: Zed Books, 1991, pp. 70-79; David Seddon, "Politics and the Gulf Crisis: Government and Popular Responses in the Maghreb," in *ibid.*, pp. 104-116.
2. Haseeb and Rouchdy, p. 76.
3. For details on this specific Israeli-Syrian deal, see the Arab newspaper, *Kul al-Arab*, published in Nazareth, Israel, 7 March 1992, p. 2. The same newspaper

- reports various meetings between King Hassan of Morocco, Shimon Perez of Israel, and various Syrian officials.
4. Seddon, pp. 106-107.
  5. Sayigh, Yezid, "The Arab Grassroots Response to the Gulf Crisis," in *The Gulf War and The New World Order*, pp. 143-44.
  6. Quoted in Moghadam, Val. "The Neopatriarchal State in the Middle East: Development, Authoritarianism and Crisis" in *The Gulf War and the New World Order*, p. 203.
  7. In 1986, Meron Benvenisti estimated land expropriation at 52% in the West Bank and 49% in Gaza Strip, (Benvenisti, Meron and Shlomo Khayat, *The West Bank and Gaza Atlas*, Jerusalem, 1989). In 1991, according to Al-Haq, 60% of the land in the West Bank and over 55% in Gaza have been expropriated. Cited from *News from Within*, 2 October 1991, p.3.
  8. Shahak, Israel, "Israeli Apartheid and the Intifada," *Race and Class*, Vol. 30, No. 1, (1988), pp. 1-12.
  9. Of the estimated 700,000 Palestinians who have been expelled from the Gulf states, about 30%, or 230,000, were workers. Included in this number are the overwhelming majority of Palestinians living in Kuwait, estimated at 350,000-400,000, who were driven out immediately after the War. (Ibrahim, Nabil, "Impact of the Gulf Crisis on the West Bank and Gaza Strip," a report prepared by the United Nations Development Program Business Development Centre, Jerusalem, January, 1991, pp. 1-54.)
  10. *al-Quds*, 16 November and 6 December 1990.
  11. For a better understanding of the social problems in the Occupied Territories, see "The Intifada and Some Women's Social Issues," a conference organized by the Bisan Centre of Development Research, Jerusalem, December 1990. A short version of the proceedings of the conference was published by Bisan Centre.
  12. Bishara, Azmi. "Palestine in the New World Order," *MERIP Reports*, No. 175, Vol. 22, No. 2, (1992), pp. 2-8.
  13. A graphic illustration of the psychological impact of the Gulf war on the Palestinians has been provided by Kathy Glavanis in her "Changing Perceptions and Constant Realities: Palestinian and Israeli Experiences of the Gulf War" in *The Gulf War and the New World Order*, pp. 117-135.
  14. Abdo, Nahla. "Women of the Intifada; gender, class and national liberation," *Race and Class*, Vol. 32, No. 4, (1991), pp. 19-34.

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# **Malama 'Aina**

## **Take Care of the Land**

***Haunani-Kay Trask***

*Aloha mai. Aloha kakou.*

I am Haunani-Kay Trask, a descendant of the Pi'ilani line of Maui and the Kahakumakaliua line of Kaua'i. I greet you as an indigenous woman, as an American-subjugated Native, as part of a non-self-governing people—Hawaiians—and as a Polynesian member of the pan-Pacific movement for self-determination that has been growing in our part of the world for the last 30 years.

We in the Pacific have been pawns in the power games of the "master" races since colonialism first brought Euro-Americans into our vast ocean home. After Western contact destroyed millions of us through introduced diseases, conversion to Christianity occurred in the chaos of physical and spiritual dismemberment. Economic and political incorporation into foreign countries (Britain, France, the United States) followed upon mass death. Since the second World War, we Pacific Islander survivors have been witness to nuclear nightmare.

Now, our ancestral homelands—Hawai'i and the Pacific—are planned convergence points of the New World Order. In our geographic area, the coalition of "wealthy political entities" that Brecher analyzes has resulted in extreme U.S. militarization of our islands and increasing nuclearization of the Pacific Basin; exploitation of ocean resources (including toxic dumping) by Japan, Taiwan, Korea, the United States, and others; commodification of island cultures by mass-based corporate tourism; economic penetration and land takeovers by Japanese and other Asian money; and forced emigration of indigenous islanders from their nuclearized homelands that can only be termed "diaspora."

"Unregulated transnational corporate activity," as Brecher names it, has resulted in tremendous environmental and cultural destruction

as well as the steady death of our people due to inundation by a mad industrial nationalism.

But as John Brown Childs points out, "industrial" is the key adjective. As indigenous peoples, *our* nationalism is born not of predatory consumption, nor of murderous intolerance, but of a genealogical connection to our place, Hawai'i and—by Polynesian geographical reckoning—the Pacific.

In our genealogy, Papahānaumoku—Earth mother—mated with Wakea—sky father—from whence came our islands, or *moku*. Out of our beloved islands came the *taro*, our immediate progenitor, and from the *taro*, our chiefs and people.

Our relationship to the cosmos is thus familial. As in all of Polynesia, so in Hawai'i: elder sibling must feed and care for younger sibling who returns honor and love. The wisdom of our creation is reciprocal obligation. If we husband our lands and waters, they will feed and care for us. In our language, the name for this relationship is *malama 'aina*: care for the land which will care for all family members in turn.

This indigenous knowledge is not unique to Hawaiians, but is shared by most indigenous peoples throughout the world. The voices of Native peoples, much popularized in these frightening times, speak a different language than old-world nationalism. Our claims to uniqueness, to cultural integrity, should not be misidentified as "tribalism." We are stewards of the Earth, our mother, and we offer an ancient, umbilical wisdom about how to protect and ensure her life.

This lesson of our cultures has never been more crucial to global survival. To put the case in Western terms: biodiversity is guaranteed through human diversity. No one knows how better to care for Hawai'i, our island home, than those of us who have lived here for thousands of years. On the other side of the world from us, no people understand the desert better than those who inhabit her. And so on, throughout the magnificently varied places of the Earth. Forest people know the forests; mountain people know the mountains; plains people know the plains. This is an elemental wisdom that has nearly disappeared because of industrialization, greed, and hatred of that which is wild and sensuous.

If this is our heritage, then the counter to the New World Order is not more uniformity or more conformity, but more autonomy, more localized control of resources and the cultures they can maintain. *Human diversity ensures biodiversity.*

Unremittingly, the history of the modern period is the history of increasing conformity, paid for in genocide and ecocide. The more we

are made to be the same, the more the environment we inhabit becomes the same: "backward" peoples forced into a "modern" (read "industrial") context can no longer care for their environment. As the people are transformed, or more likely, exterminated, their environment is progressively degraded, parts of it destroyed forever. Physical despoliation is reflected in cultural degradation. A dead land is preceded by a dying people. As an example, indigenous languages replaced by "universal" (read "colonial") languages result in the creation of "dead languages." But what is "dead" or "lost" is not the language but the people who once spoke it and transmitted their mother tongue to succeeding generations. Lost, too, is the relationship between words and their physical referents. Here, in Hawai'i, English is the major language, but it cannot begin to feel the physical beauty of our islands in the unparalleled detail of the Hawaiian language. Nor can English reveal how we knew animals to be our family; how we harnessed the ocean's rhythms, creating massive fishponds; how we came to know the migrations of deep-ocean fish and golden plovers from the Arctic; nor how we sailed from hemisphere to hemisphere with nothing but the stars to guide us. English is foreign to Hawai'i; it reveals nothing of this place where we were born, where our ancestors created knowledge now "lost" to the past.

The secrets of the land die with the people of the land. This is the bitter lesson of the modern age. Forcing human groups to be alike results in destruction: of languages, of environments, of nations.

*The land cannot live without the People of the land who, in turn, care for their heritage, their mother.* This is an essential wisdom of indigenous cultures and explains why, when Native peoples are destroyed, destruction of the Earth proceeds immediately. In Hawai'i, the uprooting and great dying of my people was quickly followed by massive and irreparable changes to the land. Under U.S. control, Hawai'i has been transformed into a tinsel version of the fragile beauty it once was. As a 19th-century plantation economy gave way to a modern tourist/military economy, our lands and waters have been increasingly poisoned, developed, or destroyed altogether. Militarism and tourism—twin engines of *haole* (white) U.S. culture in Hawai'i—have increased their rapacious consumption of our physical and cultural heritage as we enter the 21st century.

Now, we Hawaiians have no control over the massive tourist industry which imports more than six million foreigners into our tiny islands every year. Multinational corporations sell our beauty; the world's rich buy it in two- and four-week packages. These foreigners,

mostly *haole* and Japanese, think of our homeland as theirs, that is, as a place they have a claim to visit, pollute, and destroy by virtue of their wealth. Our role, as indigenous people, is to serve and wait upon these visitors, to illuminate and fulfill their dreams. Throughout the Pacific Basin, First World tourists play out this racist fantasy of an "island vacation," ruining our waters and lands, degrading our living cultures. When they leave, tourists have learned nothing of our people or our place. They have not listened to the land or heard her singing.

And still Western stupidity knows no bounds: our islands are also nuclear hotspots. While tourists flock to our homelands, the U.S. military continues to maintain bases and airfields and storage sites and dumping grounds and tracking stations. The white war machine, including nuclear submarines and missiles, is well-oiled and ready for deployment on a moment's notice. Hawai'i, like most of the Pacific, is a nuclearized paradise.

Of course, the rush to sameness is resisted by indigenous peoples everywhere. Indeed, indigenous peoples are among the most resilient in the face of the existing world order.

And yet, Native peoples' resilience depends on certain physical conditions: our homelands must be protected from destructive developments, like deforestation, industrial projects, and mass-based tourism; immigration and in-migration into Native areas must be regulated or restricted *by indigenous peoples for our benefit*; and indigenous human rights, like those enunciated in the current draft of the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples now being considered at the United Nations, must be guaranteed—for example, rights to self-determination on an aboriginal land base; rights to our languages, to our religions, to our economies, to integrity as distinct peoples, to the security of our families, especially our children, and perhaps most urgent, the right to be protected from physical and cultural genocide. Above all, modern nation-states, especially the super-industrial powers like Japan, the United States, and European countries, must honor and protect these rights because they are the nations most responsible for chronic violations.

But can we, as Native peoples, resist the planned New World Order by ourselves?

Probably not. The state of the world gives us little hope. Native resistance can be and has been crushed. As indigenous nations die out, our peoples reach a point of irreparable harm. We cannot sustain our numbers, our cultures, our stewardship of the Earth. Even while they plan our demise, First World countries and those aspiring to that status

memorialize our passing. We are not heroes, or models, to an unsung world.

The choices are clear. As indigenous peoples, we fight for Papahānaumoku, even as she—and we—are dying.

But where do people in the industrial countries draw *their* battle lines? On the side of mother Earth? On the side of consumption? On the side of First World nationalism?

If human beings, Native and non-Native alike, are to create an alternative to the planned New World Order, then those who live in the First World must change their *culture*, not only their leaders.

Who, then, bears primary responsibility? Who carries the burden of obligation? Who will protect mother Earth?



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# A Very Bad Way to Enter the Next Century

*Petra Kelly*

## Europe after the Cold War

We were all unprepared for the idea that the Iron Curtain would suddenly dissolve, that there would be rampant revolutions in Eastern Europe, that communism would be falling apart at the seams. It was the time for utopia. Two years ago, I wrote "we have this big hope." The world can change. We can have disarmament and conversion and a peace dividend. We won't have resource wars. And then came the Gulf War and Panama. And Eastern Europe became a kind of Latin American backyard for Western Europe.

At first we received the East Germans with champagne, we were crying, we were dancing in the streets. After three months it was all finished. The chance we had, the vision of how to make a confederation rather than unification, of how to treat East Germany in a more dignified way, of how to help them become an ecological society—we're not doing this. East Germany has become a kind of dump for West Germany. We're sending our poisonous things to them, we're sending our bad industries to them, we're building nuclear power plants for them.

In the alternative movement in Western Europe in the last 20 years we achieved a certain amount more of democracy, of citizens becoming their own experts, an understanding about alternative technologies. All of this is back at square one. Everything we learned in Western Europe, our friends in Eastern Europe are now facing. And they say to us, "We haven't got a chance. How are we supposed to resist your banks, your companies, your know-how, your government? We just got out of 40 years of dictatorship, and now you're telling us it's wrong again."

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Petra Kelly originally offered to write a contribution for this book but, pressed for time, proposed an interview instead. This piece is edited from a two-hour interview conducted by John Brown Childs on June 13, 1992—one of the last given by Kelly before her death. Despite her grim appraisal of the state of the world, she sounded full of fight, and said "I'm going to be running, I hope" in the 1994 parliamentary elections.

In East Germany, groups that I know to be very good and very radical say to us, "Don't talk to us about experiments any more. We just had one for 40 years that went wrong. So now let us simply try to get a little bit of the pie." They're afraid it could go wrong again. And of course it's gone all wrong.

I don't see Eastern Europe having the chance of its revolution again. The chance was there, the round tables met. They had the most incredible constitutions worked out. We had one of the bravest and most feminist and ecological constitutions worked out for a new Eastern Germany. Kohl made sure to tell the world, "We don't like this kind of radical Germany. We don't want it."

We had big hopes that once East Germany was liberated, there would be no military there. Now German troops are stationed there and NATO troops are going to go there. They moved into headquarters that were first occupied by Hitler and then occupied by Honnecker's army; now the German Bundt is living in them.

There are strong feminist women who have come into politics in Eastern Europe, but the elections after the revolutions put fewer women to the parliaments than before. When the elections came, the men took the seats. In Czechoslovakia, Havel has tried to nominate many women to key ambassador-level jobs, but in parliament they lost out, and in East Germany just as much. There are eight alternative people from East Germany, but most of the strong women are missing.

We had a strong Green Party in Czechoslovakia. In Poland the ecological clubs are very strong. In Russia I met many excellent groups in Leningrad and Moscow—small, but very hard-working. In Bulgaria there was *Ekoglasnost*; in Romania there were some small but brave groups. But the Greens were almost decimated in the elections. In Czechoslovakia the ecological groups were expected to get up to 10%, and I think they were down to about 1 or 2%. Even the Civic Forum, the group that supported Havel, has in the recent elections dropped down below 5%. You just want to scream, because it was the most powerful force in Czechoslovakia, it was like *Solidarnosc* in Poland at one point. And in Poland, there has been a strong reactionary Catholic influence. Lech Walesa, now that he's president, is no longer the radical Lech Walesa he used to be.

There are small Green groups still present and working hard. In Hungary, for example, they have been effective working against the building of the Danube electrical plant, but they have made little difference in the elections. In Slovenia, there are about ten members of the Green Party who are ministers. They are doing good things like

trying to stop a reactor project, but they are of course totally unnoticed because of the war. The Green Party there gained many votes on the platform of nonviolence, of having no military intervention whatsoever, and doing nonviolent training, but it's gotten completely lost. In the Baltic republics there have been Green movements and the governments took a strong nonviolent position, saying they didn't want to have military forces—they'd like to have a civilian defense.

There is a Green alliance in Eastern Europe that meets every few weeks with the Greens of Western Europe in the European Parliament. But when you speak to them you don't have a feeling of hope that they will get into Parliament. They've been decimated by the broad Christian democratic, social democratic, liberal tendencies of the big parties.

## **The Rise of Nationalism**

In Yugoslavia we knew many environmental and human rights groups coming from all different parts of the country. When the civil war broke out, they split. They hated each other, although they had worked together in the underground for 20 years. This is one of the saddest things I can imagine. Yugoslav human rights advocates told me in tears that all the friends with whom they fought year after year in the underground have fallen apart into these separatist, nationalistic tendencies, saying, "I'm a Croat," "I'm a Serb." "I can't speak to you any more. I'm sorry; it's finished."

In Czechoslovakia, before this all broke out, I had the feeling that they were rather united, that they really wanted to uphold a humanistic system and try to live together, but the groups are losing their loyalties to each other and saying, "I can't speak to him any more because he likes to have a separate state and I don't." The same in Romania. Suddenly your dialect, where you come from, your historical problems, historical hatreds, your historical relationship to each other becomes the most important issue. Even in Germany, activists from Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia who live here end up saying, "I can't stand him any more, the barber or the person I take my coffee with, because he's a Croat." And they had been together as friends up until the time of the war.

This is something that nobody was prepared for, nobody understood it. I'm waiting for the Basques in Spain to start; I'm waiting for the Irish to begin. It would seem very natural for them to start it as well. While the European union is supposed to be being built up, and we're

supposed to get this common currency, all of Europe is falling apart. It's the most ironic situation.

We had an organization called the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, UNPO. It includes peoples and nations who have no seat in the United Nations, so there were Eskimos and Hawaiians and Tibetans. Some talked about becoming sovereign or becoming an independent country. You can understand that. But in the process of saying they would like to become that, they began separating themselves from everything around them. And suddenly you realize they're not talking about one world. It's first of all this idea of their own song and their flag and their identity and their language, and you can understand it so well, it seems to be very positive. But then it takes on a rightwing expression because jobs are missing, because economically they can't survive, and it goes into a very ugly nationalistic tendency.

## **Racism and Neofascism**

In Germany you can read every magazine—*Stern* or *Kreik* or *Bundt*—and you will see “Asylum seekers get better housing.” Next week it will say, “Asylum seeker rapes woman.” Next week “Asylum seekers don't eat German food.” It's building up the typical, normal, average hatred of a normal, average German.

I can go into a beauty shop and the person who cuts my hair, who's a very liberal person, starts telling me “I don't want any foreigners working in my beauty shop any more. I don't trust them. They lie.” I go into a cafe and there will be a foreigner sitting next to us, and the next thing I hear, somebody is saying, “Get up, you old man, get back into the forest where you came from.” This is suddenly normal in Germany.

Our Tibetan and Chinese friends in Germany, especially in Eastern Germany, cannot be in the streets after 6:00 at night. I never go into a subway any more at night. I can't take seeing that people are literally thrown out of the window in subways. Alone you can't really help anyone because there's no German who will get up and help you to protect somebody.

There are groups with fascist connections throughout Europe and with the American Nazi Party and those connected to David Duke. In Germany they are burning crosses. It's explosive in France; it's very bad in Sweden, in Denmark against the Kurds, in Great Britain.

You get a tendency now to make Europe into a fortress. European laws are being changed dramatically to keep out foreigners. The interior ministers would like to have a European police force, a European

Interpol, to make sure the European Community wards off all these people that are hungry and need to be clothed. People that I know to be liberal, not in any way rightwing, have turned completely rightwing because they see foreigners as taking away your home, taking away your jobs, none of which is correct.

There is a strong alliance between the press, the church, and rightwing politicians in Germany. Every week people get told on television that 50 or 60% of foreigners misuse the right of asylum, that they're all economic refugees, that they all take drugs and kill people. Of course, no German takes drugs or kills anybody.

Our courts in Germany are clearly showing sympathy for young people who attack foreigners. There will be a young man, a German neo-Nazi, driving a truck and hitting a Senegalese person, then dumping some kind of poisonous gas on top of him, and then driving over his arm. And the judge will say, "This is not very good what you did, but you were drunk. Because you were drunk, I have to be lenient." And he ends up getting a very mild sentence. If any peace activist had ever even touched an arm of a policeman, let alone driven a car toward him, he'd be in prison for the next three years.

All the tendencies toward xenophobia are coming back again. I don't think Germany has really ever worked them through. I believe we're not ready for a multicultural society. This ridiculous fear of strange things, of foreign things, makes Germans say, "Germany for the Germans" again, and "Germans are far better; we're still better than the rest of the people. We are something special."

I didn't notice this before reunification. It has been forced by the large number of Germans, almost 85 million, coming together, and the idea that we have this influence over Eastern Europe. We're bullying people around again. And the first victim this time has not been the Jew, it's the foreigner. It's another form of anti-Semitism; it's now the foreigner who's bad, who's done everything, who's ruining your whole country.

It's amazing how many people supported Mr. Schoenhuber of the Republicans in Baden Rutenberg in the last election. You ask people in the streets, "Why did you vote for this demagogue?" And they simply say, "Because I want to have quiet and peace, and I don't want any foreigners living in my villa."

## Human Rights

Human rights to me is the most essential element in foreign policy. Whether it be the way Indians in the United States are treated, or how the people seeking asylum are treated in Germany, or whether it be Tibetans or the Chinese. In Germany, just as in the United States, human rights are instrumentalized. You use human rights to your own advantage when you can criticize an enemy, but once any of your friends are committing violations, like the Turks against the Kurds, then you shut up. In the Cold War attitude, the enemy of my enemy was always my friend. China was the enemy of Russia, so China was good. This kind of thinking brought about double-standard human rights policies.

The Green Party is the only group that I know of in Europe—especially in Germany—who never succumbed to this instrumentalization. We always said when human rights are trodden anywhere and we can do anything we'll get ourselves involved. The impression we got from many governments was that the Greens should shut up and not do this. We demonstrated in Turkey, in Moscow. I was arrested in East Germany for our demonstration on the Alexanderplatz in '83. We went to the South African embassy and occupied it for 48 hours, tied ourselves to the chairs and didn't leave.

These were small but powerful actions which had a multiplicative effect. But the momentum was only possible as long as we were strong in the Parliament, when we had all the machinery, all the fax machines, all the financial help. And now that the Greens are no longer in the national Parliament, this has broken down. It shows that the effort of just a few committed people can make a big difference in human rights.

You have to be very public, you have to be rather courageous in the actions you do, and you also have to target the companies that are dealing with regimes that trod on human rights. For example, for many years I followed in Parliament the case of German weapons being sent to Iraq to Saddam Hussein. The Greens had a list of companies who had done this. We tried to boycott them. But there has been no public outcry; there has been no consumer boycott.

For eight years I was kind of the lobby for people in China and I tried very hard to get parliamentary legislation to stop German credits from going to China. In fact, right after the terrible massacre at Tiananmen Square I got two Green resolutions unanimously accepted by the whole Parliament to stop development aid, all high-level visits, and all credits to China. And in fact I held it until I had to leave Parliament. After I left Parliament the friends who helped me stuck to it, but the govern-

ment got very strong and revised it. It was very painful, because I had kept at this for eight years.

It showed me that unless you have very strong public action, nonviolent action in front of the embassies, a lot of Amnesty International activity, a lot of grassroots activity, you cannot pressure even your own government. But because I did have a lot of backing from the democracy movement in China, and a lot of help from the Tibetans, I was able to apply pressure very well in Parliament. We were able to do both: be out in the street and apply pressure in Parliament.

We tried to boycott German companies who were sending cattle prods to China, which are used against Tibetans. We tried to boycott Mercedes Benz, which was exporting telephone systems to South Africa. The small committed groups would help, but the majority of the people had a feeling that you couldn't move anything with this.

We tried to get a toy boycott going against Chinese toys. We couldn't get it going because if you did an act in front of the Chinese Embassy, if you got arrested—which happened to me rather many times—you would get very high fines. And the other colleagues who were not in Parliament just couldn't pay the fines any more. So they stayed away.

There's a lot of pressure against human rights activists in Germany. As soon as you upset any of the major economic allies, you are upsetting the whole apple cart. So it's a very long, difficult road, but to me human rights is the most important part of politics; for me it's the cornerstone. It's the testing ground.

## **Connecting the Local and the Global**

When I compare the Third World activists, like people in the Chipko movement or the people in Malaysia in the Third World Network, I always feel they are far more radical and far more in solidarity with the global scene. When I look at European groups, they're very Eurocentric. And when I look at U.S. groups—I spoke at the National Organization for Women convention in San Francisco two years ago—my impression was that their's is just like the German attitude that we have to liberate ourselves first. Those in the Third World confront violence and structural violence much more directly than we do, so they are more radical in their whole analysis. I think we have to learn from them. But we tend to look at them and say, "Well, we've done it all in the '60s and the '70s." I feel very embarrassed in meetings where the



Western women or men act condescending. We end up like the rich aunt or uncle saying "We'll tell you how to do it."

I have a Tibetan foster daughter living in the community of the Dalai Lama in Dharma Sala; I've often gone to North India to visit her. Traveling through India, I met many incredible grassroots groups, for example women who did nonviolent action in front of missile sites that were being built with German money involved. They were completely informed about who was building them, why they were building them, and they were doing terrific nonviolent action. And none of us knew about this.

There seems to be a feeling that, "Well, what we don't know doesn't seem to be important," and very little solidarity toward these people. There's solidarity morally, yes, but not financially. We had a network where German Green women helped women in Thailand open up an office so that prostitutes could get legal and medical help and, if they liked, retraining for another job. As soon as the Greens had to give money, the problems began. "We need this money more at home." In the beginning, in the late '70s when we began the Greens, there was much more openness toward that, much more solidarity. Now we've become kind of self-important, arrogant about our own goals, and very restrictive about the money, forgetting that we have to share our resources with those groups in the Third World.

We talk about how governments should do this, but we're not doing it ourselves. The more powerful the German Greens became at home, the more we took domestic issues to be the most important ones. To prevent some street being built is more important than to prevent the rain forests from being cut down. Politics then becomes very much narrowed down to the small goal that a minister is about to take on. I feel that the more important and powerful we become, the more we have to connect the local to the global issues.

For eight years I helped bring printing presses and photocopiers illegally to Prague. We got stopped many times and I got in trouble over it, but it was a very helpful thing. Just after President Havel got elected, Jane Fonda, who I never knew before, called me and asked if I could help arrange a trip for her to visit him. She said, "What can I bring?" We asked Havel. He said, literally, "I need a fax, a phone, and a photocopier." And she actually took two suitcases full of computers, fax machines, and answering machines. We went to the Civic Forum and the people did not even have photocopiers. They were writing letters over and over again by hand. And I remember saying to myself, "This is so ridiculous. This is a revolution that's just happened and they haven't

even got a fax machine." So you can imagine what an office looks like in India.

I think this infrastructure is one of the most minimal things that we can do. If we tell governments to give their technology, we must also share our grassroots equipment. In India and other countries it's very difficult to spread the word, to print things, to photocopy texts, to get material about how to stop a nuclear power plant, to distribute action manuals. We don't realize how difficult it would be for us if we didn't have any of these means.

## **The Earth Summit**

The Earth Summit has failed terribly. There's been no move toward democratization of the World Bank and the IMF. There has been no reduction of the debts the South owes the Northern banks, which was one of the key demands of the environmental movement in the South. Protecting indigenous people living in rain forests across the world was not taken up.

Transnational companies like those that made the Bhopal disaster were sitting secretly at the table in Rio, but they were not there to be controlled or to get information about the damage they have done. Up to 80% of all environmental damage has been done by transnational companies. They're completely uncontrolled, even after Rio. They can go home and laugh at this whole summit because they have not been put to the test.

There's been no discussion about what kind of system has allowed this. Capitalism has won after the Eastern European revolution, but after you look at Rio, you realize you can't go on with such a capitalistic system either. This system is probably going to drive the whole world to its death.

Bush came out saying we need even more growth. And we keep saying it's the wrong kind of growth he's talking about. The world won't allow our standard of living to be given to every Chinese, to every Indian. That means we have to reduce our lifestyle. The rich countries have not been able to say one self-critical thing. They point their fingers at the South and say, "You are now going to pollute because you're going to grow. You're going to have more people, more cars, more energy." It's the North that has been responsible for two-thirds of all environmental destruction. But there has been no discussion about reducing affluence and saying simply that we can't go on doing what we've been doing. This is what has not happened in Rio.

For the first time there has been a really big difference between the European Community's position and the United States' position. That's rather unusual because usually the European Community gives in when the United States is opposing anything. When Bush said he wouldn't sign the Species Protection Convention because it would hurt the U.S. biotechnological industry, there were big cries of shock in the German newspapers, even conservative papers. They felt that, at the minimum, the conventions for the tropical forests, for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and for the protection of species should be binding and should be signed by all industrial nations including the United States.

Another idea had been to make a kind of an alternative Earth council. Collect experts, jurists, and scientists in every area—tropics, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, or atmospheric pollution—and set up Earth councils that review governmental policies in every part of the world, forming a kind of a body of the elders, of elder statesmen or stateswomen, to act as a public conscience. Of course a binding court system would be even more effective.

The idea of an environmental court crept up at the preparatory meetings for the Earth Summit. This is an idea that has been proposed by Manikka Gandhi, who at one point was minister for forestries and nature in India. She advocated regional, national, and international environmental courts which could try cases like Chernobyl or Bhopal or the chemicals Swiss companies put into the Rhine. There has never been a tribunal where they could be tried, where all of the facts could be given to the public, on the model of the International Court of Justice. But, of course, that is not taken seriously any more either. I remember when the United States said about Nicaragua, "We don't care what the Court decides. We'll go ahead and do it anyway."

## **The Future of Alternative Movements**

When I look at the alternative movement I can say, "Well yes, there is still a small hope that one day eventually we'll somehow get into the institutions, we'll break through and get into Parliament, maybe break through and get into government." But overall, it's far too small. Four years ago the German Greens were at 8 or 9%; now we're back down to 4%. The Green Party in Great Britain has dropped down to only 5%; they were at 20% in 1987, I believe. In France the Greens split into two groups because Mitterand build up a second Green group to destroy the first one. I see it breaking down in Spain, in Holland. There are now two groups in Belgium.

It was supposed to be our decade. At the moment, it seems we have lost the battle. We are all hanging in, but we don't seem to have much influence any more. The democratization we felt would swoop from Eastern Europe back over to us again, the kind of glasnost that we said we needed at home as well—it hasn't happened.

Look at what is happening to Siberia. There's Japanese, German, U.S., and Korean companies exploiting every bit of it, burning down the last Siberian forest. I think we'll have none left in 20 years. Siberia is being taken apart piece by piece by Western companies. And the people there have no say-so, they have no codetermination, they have no idea what is happening. All they know is that the companies destroy everything and they have nothing from it—just poverty.

To me this is the symbol. This last untouched region of the world is now completely scorched and destroyed. And we the alternative movement were unable even to understand how quickly it happened. To read suddenly there's a Korean company with 2,000 workers cutting down the forest. There's a German company, there's a U.S. company, and a Canadian consortium. They're all destroying it in front of our eyes and we can't even get ourselves together, let alone stop anything.

When we get letters from Russian friends who say, "Please come and help us," we just sit there and say, "How on Earth are we supposed to help now? What are we supposed to do?" And they tell us "You're democracies, stop your companies from doing this." It's a kind of testing ground. We can't stop German companies. If you take a look at their legal situation, you realize you can't stop them in Parliament. They operate outside of your legal means. There's no legal means to control them.

We don't have one world. Ms. Bruntland was correct when she wrote in her report, "We may be one Earth, but we're not one world." That's really a very bad way to enter the next century. It's probably the worst possible way.

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## **Part III**

### **Globalization-from-Below: Alternatives**

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# For an Alliance of Hope

*Muto Ichiyo*

## The Hope and Spirit of Our Time

The slogan at the beginning of the 20th century was progress. The cry at the end of the 20th century is survival. The call for the next century is hope. It is impelled by that hope in the future, and with a keen sense of urgency, that we begin our Gathering of the People's Plan for the 21st Century in Minamata.

It is significant that we meet in Minamata, a place in the world which symbolizes to all of us development at its most murderous. As it did to the people of Bhopal and Chernobyl, a giant organization with advanced science, technology, and production methodology brought to our hosts at Minamata fear, sickness, and death, and brought to their beautiful bay deadly damage that may not be repaired for decades or centuries. These three disasters—Minamata, Bhopal, and Chernobyl—can be taken as benchmarks of our time. At Minamata, the industry of a capitalist country poisoned its own citizens. At Bhopal, a huge Northern multinational corporation poisoned people of a country of the South. At Chernobyl, a socialist government spilled radiation out over its land and people, and beyond its borders to the whole world. There is no need here to repeat the long and mounting list of eco-catastrophes. These three tell the story: there is no place to hide.

We know that the 20th century, the Age of Development, brought us many things which we value. But we also must be coolly realistic. The 20th century has brought us more, and more murderous, wars than any time in history. The technology of killing has advanced beyond the wildest imagination of any previous era. The state, which was supposed

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This was the keynote speech at the first People's Plan 21 gathering in Minamata, Japan in 1989, which brought together people's organizations from all over the Asian-Pacific region. (Minamata was the site of widespread mercury poisoning in the 1950s, caused by the Chisso Company.) Muto Ichiyo was National Coordinator for PP21. A second PP21 gathering was held in Thailand in December, 1992. A PP21 group was also established in Central America in 1992.



to be our great protector, has turned out to be the greatest killer, killing not only foreigners in wars, but also killing its own citizens in unprecedented numbers. Economic development, which was supposed to raise the world out of poverty, has so far only transformed undeveloped poverty into developed poverty, traditional poverty into modernized poverty designed to function smoothly in the world economic system. The 20th century has added two grim new words to our vocabulary: genocide and ecocide. The practices that gave birth to these words have all grown out of advanced science and technology. And they have occurred in the name of what we have called "progress" and "development." We must ask, is there not something profoundly wrong with our understanding of historical progress, with our picture of what to fight for, with our image of where to place our hopes?

Mr. Hamamoto taught us a beautiful word in the Minamata dialect, *Janakashaba*. Literally it means "a world that does not stand like this." It is an exciting word, telling us there can be a quantum leap, a break, from what we are, what we have, what we are resigned to accept as our fate. This is precisely what is being acted out before our eyes today by millions of people in Asia and the Pacific region. They do not accept what has been foisted on them as their fate, they are ready to take the leap, and they are taking it. We witness wave after wave of peoples' movements emerging, spreading, cutting across state boundaries, complementing each other, and sharing an increased sense of contemporariness fostered by new networks of communication. The major struggles of the Korean, Philippine, and Burmese people have shown explosive power. Recently they have been joined on a tremendous scale by the new democratization movement of the Chinese people. In these big countries and in the smaller ones, in every prefecture, town, and village, the people are on the move. And they are aware of each other as never before, watching each other, communicating, joining in unprecedented ways. All of this is new. It is the main force defining our situation and the main reason for this conference. *Janakashaba* is the spirit of the people in our time. This is why we do not hesitate, despite everything this century has brought us, to declare that the 21st century will be the century of hope.

## **State of Our Region**

These new movements are growing up within the context of a peculiar contradiction that is appearing in the role of the state. Our region is being organized by transnational capital, which is bringing together far-flung and heterogeneous areas and peoples into a single, vertical

division of labor. The state, as the agency which mediates the entry of transnational capital within the national boundaries, is serving as a vigorous promoter of the emerging pattern. At the same time, transnationalization of the economy undermines the basis of the state, placing its claim to sovereignty and its pose as protector into question, and weakening its legitimacy. The state seeks to protect itself through intensification of repression and violence, as we are seeing today in a series of "developing" countries including China, or, as in the case of Japan, through an intensification of the attempt to implant statist ideology into the minds of the people.

In this same process, the engine of development has overheated in Japan and is running wildly out of control, producing a saturation economy. Japanese work an average of 2,200 hours a year, mostly in heavily managed situations in which they are virtually powerless. They are bombarded with advertising that urges them to compensate for frustration by consuming. At the same time, virtually every human activity and every bodily function has a whole shelf of consumer goods or commercial services associated with it. The manner in which one combs one's hair, wipes one's nose, or scratches a mosquito bite are all the subjects of intensive market research and intense product and service competition. The commodification of every aspect of human life includes the commodification of sex, which has produced a huge sex industry in which hundreds of thousands of women, many imported from other Asian countries, are made to serve in order to satisfy the Japanese male taste for alienated sex. The world's most powerful economy does not empower its citizens, but rather seeks to make them powerless and fragmented. And it has also reproduced within its boundaries a "North" and a "South." The "South" includes millions of poorly paid women part-timers, subcontract workers, day laborers, and increasingly, migrant workers from South and Southeast Asia, as well as farmers who are being rapidly marginalized.

Here too the system has begun to undermine itself. The economy has pushed itself to such absurd lengths that more and more people are simply fed up with it, and are beginning to search for a different way of living.

## **New Approaches**

In this turbulently changing situation, we need new maps. We need a new picture, a new paradigm, of the society in which we can live together in dignity. But we need not go far to find this new paradise.

We can partly see it already, emerging out of the peoples' movements themselves. This is no romanticism: we are referring here to specific new concepts emerging from certain of these movements.

First let us look at the Asia-Pacific people's movement itself, as it has emerged in the last couple of decades. Everywhere we see the patient, dedicated efforts to promote empowerment—of community people, ethnic groups, women, labor groups, urban slum dwellers, people organizing themselves against "development" imposed from above, or asserting their independence and autonomy. The major national explosions of popular will are in most cases prepared in these small-scale accumulated efforts of empowerment and "conscientization." It is here that the notion of the people as sovereign is being nurtured in concrete form. In the face of this new movement of the people, many grassroots thinkers, religious and intellectual, have drawn on the liberating elements in their teachings to shape them into new forms through which the people can express their anger and hope. The various peoples' theologies and practical philosophies developed in recent years, as well as indigenous values found in folktales and traditional popular arts, are given new light to rebuild people's identity.

This grassroots movement for empowerment points to a new form of democracy, a democracy which we have never seen before, and whose outlines are not yet clear to us. But we can say for certain that it is something more than "democracy" as a form of state. It is a kind of "democracy on the spot," a community-based democracy through which the people build power over the things that matter in their lives.

Then there are the indigenous peoples' movements. The revitalization of their struggles of survival and self-determination has enabled us to re-read the history of modern civilization originating in the West. At the same time, the Aino people in Japan have revealed to us the whole history of Japan's invasion of their lands. Also, their struggles and values show us a different way of living in harmony with nature, of which we also are part.

Women's movements and feminist ideas have also contributed to new ways of viewing history and understanding the present. They have shown, for instance, that the dominant notions of politics, economics, organization, and culture have been profoundly characterized by the structural domination of women by men. They have shown that social sciences dedicated to revolutionary change by and large have ignored the all-important process of reproduction of human beings and have thus misconceptualized work and labor and the importance of human life itself. They have shown that male-dominated values have done violence

not only to women but also to nature. And they have offered a profound and exciting new alternative—that a society reordered on the basis of harmonious and equal relations between men and women would naturally tend to move in healthier, less destructive ways.

Ecological movements since the 1970s have addressed the issue of establishing a harmonious relationship between human beings and the environment. They have shown us that unlimited economic and technological growth cannot be sustained on this planet. They also project, and partially practice, a social relationship with minimum domination, which corresponds to their human-being-within-nature model.

There is a striking concurrence of views among those new movements of different origins in that the social, historical, and ecological approaches are integrated in a single context. It is important to note now that though some of these movements started in the West, the issues they address are becoming life-or-death issues for the most marginalized populations in the Third World, where the very basis of subsistence is being destroyed at the hands of transnational corporations and their agents.

## **Common Themes**

In order to aid our search for an alternative model of future society, we designated five areas as a common agenda for all the conferences of People's Plan 21. They are: 1) Humankind and Nature—From destruction to harmony, 2) Liberation from Oppression—Creating new society and culture, 3) Overcoming Rule by the Strong—Changing the state and changing international relations, 4) Taking Back the Economy—From a relationship between things to a relationship between human beings, and 5) For a Common Future—Ethics and spirituality for people's solidarity. The subtitles indicate what we wish to counterpose to the existing realities in each area. Let us briefly introduce the items (except the last, which covers all the rest and so is discussed in the concluding part).

### ***Humankind and Nature—From destruction to harmony***

By now, nobody denies that nature on this planet is in danger. Even big powers now talk about conservation; even the Japanese government has offered a lot of money for preservation of the world environment. But such abstract conservationist cries sound hollow when nothing is said about who is causing the destruction of nature and for what.

Bringing our civilization into harmony with nature is difficult, yet urgent. It brings us straight to the question of an alternative model of

development. It is no longer a matter of how effectively to continue to exploit nature, but how to change drastically our relationship with nature.

Here we have among us people rich in wisdom on just this question. Indigenous people from Hokkaido, Canada, Sarawak, Australia, Aotearoa, and elsewhere, considering nature their partner and source of life, have been protesting for years against its exploitation and plunder. Here, the bottom line may be that no exploitation of nature should be allowed without the affected people's consent, and that what the indigenous people say on these matters is given the greatest weight.

Also, the way science and technology have been developed should be called into question. The techno-utopian solution is even now proposed by governments and business, but that is absurd: it is precisely the arrogance of technology that has wounded the world. We should begin by renouncing patently harmful technologies and their application, nuclear weapons and nuclear power among them. Soil-killing use of agricultural chemicals also must be stopped. Large-scale technology which aims at the so-called "conquest of nature" also tends to disempower the workers and farmers who use it. What are the technologies and modes of work which both empower the worker and reestablish harmony between humans and nature?

There should also be a clear recognition that we, human beings, are part of nature. Doesn't violence against nature, regarding it as a mere object of exploitation, entail and justify a similar treatment of human beings and human bodies?

Last, are harmonious relations with nature possible within a capitalist system which is unable to survive without endless accumulation?

### ***Liberation from Oppression—Creating a new society and culture***

The task is to dismantle, nationally and transnationally, the vertical integration that predominates and to replace it with a horizontal integration of individuals and groups.

By vertical integration we mean the socioeconomic class structure and other forms of hierarchical formations where individuals or groups are judged and treated by criteria chosen by those at the top and to the advantage of those at the top. It also means the division of the human community into the rich and powerful North and the poor and suppressed South. Pyramidal formations have entrenched themselves all over the world in government bureaucracies, corporate organizations, and military systems. Society as a whole has this kind of division, by status, profession, gender, caste, alleged physical and mental capacity, birthplace, religion, and other criteria for discrimination.

Aside from the state, the most powerful vertical formation is the corporation, particularly transnational corporations which exploit the fact that the people remain divided. How can we deal with them? Here, our response should also be cross-border.

To overcome this discriminatory system, we should demolish the social, institutional, and economic systems that generate or benefit from discrimination. For that to be done, we need to create new egalitarian values. Underlying these egalitarian values are what can be termed "simple personhood" or "peopleness," which we refer to later. In this way we all work to reorganize the vertical integration into a horizontal cooperation of individuals and peoples' groups. It is important here that horizontal cooperation encourages diversity as a source of wealth for society, while vertical integration imposes uniformity.

***Overcoming Rule by the Strong—Changing the state and changing international relations***

Here we deal with the state and inter-state relations. Our main concern is how we can overcome the state, which no doubt still remains the strongest entity in the world today. We need a dual approach: never losing sight of our long-term goal, we should also fight to make the state and its policies more accountable to the people and to transform regional international relations in favor of peace and justice. We shall come back to this duality later.

A new fluidity in the global international situation seems to have created a space in our region for the people to intervene. The regional political situation is turbulent, and diverse factors and actors are at work: declining U.S. power, perestroika and resultant foreign policy changes, the rise of Japan as the world's most dynamic economic power and Japan's military buildup as part of U.S. strategy, provision of huge Japanese Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) funds; rampant intervention by the United States with Japanese help in the Philippines, New Zealand's nuclear-free policy, China after Tienanmen, confrontation on the Korea unification issue, and moves toward an Indochina solution, to name only some.

How can we jointly intervene in this regional situation to weaken the rule by the strong? What are our action programs? What should our priorities be?

In Japan, the state is emerging as a strong force managing the rest of Asia and the Pacific for the interests of transnational capital. Internally Japan is a state with a system of discrimination and domination, a state based on corporate supremacy, discrimination against "aliens," minorities, women, and the weak, and the negation of the people's indepen-

dence. The state falsely claims that Japan is a mono-ethnic country and negates even the presence of Ainu as an ethnic minority. There are also 700,000 Korean people living permanently in Japan, who were taken to Japan against their will, or whose parents or grandparents had been, to be put to hard labor or who had to move to Japan as a result of Japan's colonization of their country. Instead of being compensated, they are subject to blatant discrimination in all aspects of life. Okinawa, with its distinct historical identity, is treated practically as Japan's internal colony. In fact, the postwar Japanese state has never admitted the crimes the country committed against other Asian peoples, or toward the minorities within its territory, since the Meiji period. All these injustices should be confronted and overcome.

We in Japan need to strive to go beyond Japanese statehood, ultimately overcome this state from within, and establish ourselves as people who can live together with our neighbors, in a confederation of the peoples of the archipelago.

***Taking Back the Economy—From a relationship between things to a relationship between human beings***

How can we remake this world economy which, for its survival, keeps billions of people starving or undernourished, landless, poor, and overworked in the South, and makes waste and saturation consumption a necessity in the North?

However difficult this task may be, it is obvious that we cannot go on this way much longer. An economy that can operate only through infinite growth measured by GNP will soon enough bump into the wall of the limited capacity of this planet. Nor is it sustainable in an historical period where the people's power is on the rise, for the majority in the South will not tolerate the continued disparity. We who live in Japan should refuse to contribute toward further increasing GNP and further increasing production. We should slow down our activities and reduce the productivity and efficiency of the most "advanced" sector of our industry. If we are told that such action would invite disaster, then we must say that it is the system that has to be replaced.

It is important that we begin with basics—what we need for a decent living and how those things should be produced, distributed, and consumed. Value added (GNP) should cease to be the measure for economic activities. Instead, satisfaction of human needs in a human way should be our yardstick.

Economic activities should be reintegrated with the life of the people—people in the community. Production and consumption should be organized as material aspects of communities. On this basis, commu-

nities need to be horizontally linked so as to exchange their surpluses. This is not an image of subsistence economy, nor is it a call to go back to pre-modern society. It is an image of a new affluence made possible by accumulation at the grassroots level, by people themselves. Here, people-to-people relations regulate the economy, and not vice versa. This is what we mean by "taking back the economy."

It is here that we must examine the role of innovative economic systems which counter mainstream systems. A variety of such movements are now developing: cooperatives linking organic farmers to urban consumers, workers' production collectives, people-to-people trade, buffalo banks, and credit associations. How far and in what way can these people's economic systems be a basis for our future economic systems?

Another major problem is how the relationship between agriculture and industry, between the city and countryside, should be transformed. The concentration of power and wealth has caused a concentration of population in huge urban centers like Tokyo, Seoul, Bangkok, and Shanghai. Can our envisioned decentralization of power and wealth lead to more or less smooth dispersion of the pathologically aggrandized metropolis?

## **Transborder Participatory Democracy**

Now we have sketched what kind of alternative model of development we have in mind. But isn't it a utopia?

As we have said, our alternative model of development is not a utopia. It is rooted in reality—in the reality of the world today, in the reality of the people, and—most importantly—in the reality of the people's movement. Even so, we must not naively conclude that because of the growing power of the people we can expect someday to wake up in a changed world. We cannot reach this new world without a serious search. We need to identify in the people's struggles of today those facets which reflect the new realities of the world, and in particular those facets which point to a liberated future. And we need to find ways to consolidate these elements and relate them to the 21st century to which we aspire. In other words, we need bridges.

As one such bridge, we propose a new concept of political right and political action, which we provisionally term "transborder participatory democracy." We present this as the specific people's alternative, the counter-system to stand against the particular formation that oppressive power has taken in our time: the state-supported globalization of capital.



Transborder participatory democracy is the name both of a goal and of a process. As a goal it means worldwide democracy practiced by the people of the world. It is a picture of a world order clearly distinct from the conventional idea of world government or world federation, which presupposes states as the constituent units. Yet, as our goal, it still remains a remote vision of the future.

As a political process, transborder participatory democracy has two aspects. First, it is a practical method for criticizing, confronting, intervening in, and changing the power formation of globalized capital. In this sense, it is a form of action that corresponds both to present socioeconomic reality and to the logic and necessity of the people's movements. Second, in the process of transborder political action, the people's groups and organizations gradually form themselves into transborder coalitions, eventually leading to the formation of a transborder "people," by which the division of the world into North and South can be overcome.

The dominant tendency in the Asia-Pacific region today is regional integration by state-backed globalization of capital. In this system, most of the major decisions which affect the lives of millions of people are made outside their countries, without their knowledge, much less their consent. Even those decisions made inside the country are made outside the communities of those affected, in the power centers in cities. Most of the decisions are made in the core countries, by their governments, by transnational corporations, or by collective agencies such as IMF, the World Bank, big power summits, or international business bodies.

For a time there were high hopes that it was the state which could rectify the growing international inequalities. In the 1950s the Bandung Spirit prevailed, and the people expected the coalition of the newly emergent independent states to work on their behalf, promoting import-substituting programs. For some years in the 1970s, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), bearing the banner of the New International Economic Order, seemed to be effectively pressing for redistribution of the wealth of the world in favor of the majority. Both failed. Illusions about the state as the tribune of the people have faded as almost all the Third World states—including China—have made a definite shift to the position of promoter of the logic of multinational capital and mediator of capital globalization within their own territories.

The situation calls for the declaration of a new right: the right of the people to intervene in, to modify, to regulate, and ultimately to control any decisions that affect them. This should be established as a universal right which recognizes no borders. It means that the people's action is no longer confined within the bounds of a state, nor to acting

only through the state political structure. Transborder participatory democracy is a new principle, by which not the state but the people themselves can emerge as the chief actors in determining the course of world politics and economics. "The people" here means, first of all, the people directly affected by external decisions. But transborder participatory democracy goes beyond this. It operates to form a transnationally coalesced people who emerge as the principal actors.

Take, for instance, a decision by a giant publishing company in Tokyo to inaugurate a new, glossy, useless magazine printed in millions of copies to gain advantage in the competition among publishing houses. This will further increase Japan's pulp demand. It will lead to accelerated plunder of tropical forests in Sarawak and mangrove trees in Papua New Guinea, in turn further destroying the basis of the lives of the people there. We say that the people who live there have just the same right to intervene in this decision as they would if it were being made in their own village. It does not matter where, or by what agency, the decision is being made. What matters is that the people's lives are being affected by that decision. We declare that there exists no artificial right—neither the right of private property nor the right of state sovereignty, nor for that matter the treaty-based rights of international agencies—that can take precedence over the natural democratic right of people to speak and act directly against decisions that are destroying them, no matter where or by whom those decisions are being made.

Direct intervention by people from the rain forest countries is not only a means of self-protection. It would also have an important effect on Japan. There are people here already who have their own reasons for questioning the outlandish waste of paper for junk magazines with their people-fooling messages. There are people who work for those magazines, who feel the dull despair of knowing they are devoting their lives to producing a bad product over which they have no control. If these people can learn directly what disastrous consequences the publishing industry has on far-off people, they have an opportunity to see what this "publishing industry" is in a new perspective, and to join with the affected people in protesting and intervening.

Transborder participatory democracy leads toward transborder coalitions of people, and aims ultimately for the formation of a transborder "people." In particular we can expect to see this process having an effect on the people of the northern or core countries. In Japan, for example, people engaged in this process will move away from their identity as "Japanese," in the sense of identifying with the so-called Japanese national interest—which is often synonymous with corporate

interests. For years, movement people in Japan have been saying that we produce, consume, and waste too much; some argued that in principle we should fight to lower the standard of living, but that such a strategy would be political suicide. This argument is abstract and is an expression of guilty conscience. And it misses the point, which is not a general, abstract lowering of the standard of living, but finding the specific ways in which the country can be changed to allow us to coexist with our neighbors. And as our neighbors begin demanding their legitimate right to participate in those decisions made in Tokyo which affect them, those ways will begin to become clear to us. If accompanied by a paradigm change, can't this be a way to begin first to narrow and finally to eliminate the gap between the South and North?

Transborder participatory democracy does not mean participation in the exclusive decisionmaking process of monopolies. It is not like the company union's "participation" in management decisions. On the contrary, it aims to abolish that exclusivity of decisionmaking.

Take the Japanese automobile industry, for instance. Today it is producing 12 million cars a year. By any standard, this is too many. But no one outside the closed rooms of the corporate directors has any say in this. Now we say that affected people both inside and outside Japan—the regular employees of the manufacturers, subcontract workers, subsidiary assembly workers overseas, users, city dwellers, and all who are concerned about excessive motorization—can and should assert themselves in determining what should be made, how many, for what purpose, how they should be sold, and with what kind of advertisements. Imagine what "Toyota" or "Nissan" would be in such a situation. They could no longer operate only for profit. The purpose of production would have to change. They would be forced in the direction of becoming publicly responsible and accountable. We can see how this would lead toward structural transformation of the profit-oriented nature of production.

I repeat, this is not the model of a utopia. What we describe here grows out of tendencies that already exist in the world. For some time now it has been widely accepted that in the matter of human rights there is no such thing as "intervention in internal affairs." At Berlin in 1988, the IMF-World Bank conference—where governments had gathered to negotiate on the Third World debt—was met by a huge mobilization of people from all over the world, trying to intervene against the imposition of a rich-power solution. Again, several years ago when the Japanese government announced its plan to dump nuclear wastes into the Pacific Ocean, the Pacific Island peoples sent powerful delegations to Japan and, in collaboration with Japanese movements, effectively stopped the

dumping. Transborder participatory democracy begins in this way as a movement. The experience of acting together situates people in a new universal context, in which each individual action acquires new meaning and direction.

## **Dialogue between Short-term and Long-term Perspectives**

Here short-term and long-term perspectives must not be confused. In many Asian and Pacific countries it is the immediate task of the people to establish their democratic, national states. The great struggle of the Korean people for national unification, as their path toward liberation from the big-power intervention which keeps them divided, is a case in point. The people's struggle in the Philippines aimed at establishing a national democratic government accountable to the people is another. In many of the Pacific Islands, where foreign powers are keeping people subjugated for colonial or strategic reasons, independence through the establishment of peoples' own states is essential. And at a time when most of the Third World states have degenerated into agencies for joining the big core capital interests with the interests of the local rulers, it is important to continue to try to "internalize" the state, to make it into a barrier against the dominant powers. In this sense a new alliance of people-oriented states, if such could be resurrected again, would broaden the people's opportunities.

Changing and improving state policies is also important for people in the core countries. In Japan, major policy changes are needed in the field of commitment to U.S. military strategy, in overseas development assistance, and in the entire stance of the country toward the Asia-Pacific region as well as in the area of domestic accountability. The postwar Japanese state has never clearly disavowed what Imperial Japan has done against the neighboring Asian countries since the Meiji Era; it is essential for the Japanese people to fight for a set of clear principles, based on a thorough review of the past history of national arrogance, which the Japanese state must follow.

Crucial as these struggles are, they should not be separated from the long-term perspective. Given the fearsome degree to which the region is being integrated, we cannot expect national solutions to stand by themselves as we could several decades ago. The times call for transborder solutions, and the only means for such solutions is the transborder participation of the people themselves. There should be a constant interaction, a dialogue, between the long- and short-term

perspectives. The moments of history overlap in our time. Against colonialism, the people struggle to establish their national states. Against the development-dictatorship state, the people struggle to establish democratic accountability. Against state-supported global capital, the people begin to marginalize the state, and carry the fight directly to the centers of capital wherever they are. This is not a formulation that divides the people's movements into more- and less-advanced. Transborder participatory democracy means that we join all of these struggles together. If we can begin the dialogue between our dreams and realities here, we are already on our way to the shaping of the people's future.

### **Peopleness and Inter-People Autonomy**

The key to transborder democracy is the people. But what is "the people?" Cynics whisper, "Are you not romanticizing the people? Are you not setting them up as a god?" Let us clarify.

We can begin by defining the people as we always do in this kind of discussion: they are the oppressed, the exploited, the manipulated masses. This is so, yet such "people in general" do not exist. The people are divided into a multitude of groups with their respective identities: gender, ethnic, religious, geographical, cultural, class, nation-state. These groups overlap, and individuals belong to more than one. But today, these groups are being forced to live together under conditions imposed upon them. State-supported global capital is organizing all these groups into a system of international and hierarchical division of labor. This new order is lauded as the world of interdependence. Interdependence, yes. But it is an interdependence forced upon the people and permeated by hostility and division. The dominant system perpetuates itself by organizing internal division, and setting one people's group against another. National chauvinism, religious fundamentalism, contrived communalism, cultural exclusivism, sexism, and the whole varied panoply of racial and ethnic prejudices all serve the ruling elites well in their efforts to establish a great organization incapable of its own unity.

The struggle of the people begins on this terrain, in this divisive structure. It does not begin as the full-blown struggle of the people the world over. It begins rooted in each group's identity, and asserts the group's dignity as well as its immediate interests. Or movements may begin as single-issue movements.

Thus each struggle nourishes its seed of liberation. But for the seeds to germinate, they must interact with other struggles and movements.

Suppose a Japanese workers' movement regards fellow workers from other Asian countries who are underpaid because of their illegal status as merely a threat, and shows no concern about their conditions; then their movement is no people's movement. It is operating within the borders of the compartmentalized structure which perpetuates mutual hostilities. However "militant" its action may have been, it has allowed its seed of liberation to be poisoned and eventually die.

All movements start in this compartmentalized terrain; the point is to fight our way beyond it, to destroy the whole divisive structure and replace it with a spontaneous alliance of the people's own choice and making. In this process the movement can free itself from captivity. Experience shows that interaction with other movements transforms the movement, helping overcome its narrowness and oppressive practices inside it, if there are such.

In this process, what Xabier Gorostiaga once called "the logic of the majority" should of course be the guideline. "The majority" here means the global majority, that is, the most oppressed. They have the prerogative. In the hierarchy of the 20th-century world, each stratum of the people has its own interest not only to assert against those immediately above it, but also to protect against those immediately below. Whenever the lower is forced to concede to the higher, that strengthens the existing order. It is the part of the higher to be prepared to concede to the lower. And our new ethic for the 21st century must include a way of seeing such renunciation as entailing a gain, and not a loss, in dignity.

Is this alliance, which we call the Alliance of Hope, possible? Let us call that which makes it possible "peopleness."

Peopleness manifests itself most dramatically when people risk their lives in struggle. When the people take to the streets, fight the police, expose themselves to danger, and help each other, the people's spirit becomes visible. We have seen this in Rangoon, Seoul, Kwangju, Manila, Beijing, Bangkok, and even Tokyo. Men and women, young and old, many meeting for the first time and by chance in the tear gas fog, find each other comrades. If one falls, others help, braving gunfire. There is natural equality and compassion. People transcend their immediate self-interests. A strong human bond is forged that leads people to make extraordinary sacrifices.

But this extreme expression of "peopleness" should not be separated from its roots in daily life. Here we are alike in what really matters. Each of us was born a helpless infant, each has a life to live, each faces death. Some of us have privileges, but no one is so privileged as to be exempt from these basics of human existence, or from the constant

exposure to the risks of living. We all eat, excrete, sleep, and love; many of us bear and rear children; we hate, celebrate, enjoy, toil, ponder life, fall in and out of confusion, weep, get sick, express ourselves in our own cultural ways, grow old if we are lucky, and prepare to die in dignity and repose. These simple aspects of human existence are common to all of us, and should give us a basis for relating to each other in compassion and equality. Yet so often this common peopleness is hidden from us by centuries-long relations of domination. Or, in this century, it is plastered with the fetishism of money, ambition for promotion, avarice for commodities, and craving for power. If plastered too thick, this simple personhood, peopleness, is lost, and with it the capacity to relate to others. Japanese society today is one where this capacity has been lost to a pathological degree. But if the cult of "things" is a burden, then the rediscovery of peopleness is a path to liberation.

Peopleness is not an idealist construct. It is what is actually at work in the existing solidarity movements among seemingly very different groups of people. It is what is behind the real sympathy and compassion for other people's struggles. It is what is behind the sacrifices being made for the people's cause everywhere. Denying the working of peopleness would be to deny the reality of these movements—or to render them incomprehensible. Peopleness represents our radical equality and our equal radicality.

Only by recourse to peopleness can we expect to overcome internecine conflicts between people's groups and imagine the formation of the people worldwide as the subject of transborder participatory democracy. This is a dynamic process of action and counteraction—not like the signing of an agreement in a ceremonious atmosphere.

When peoples' groups begin to regulate their mutual relationships spontaneously and for themselves, thus destroying the system of forced mutual relationships, then we shall have inter-people autonomy cutting across the state barriers and replacing the interstate system. Inter-people autonomy will represent the people of the world collaborating with each other while developing all their rich diversities.

Inter-people autonomy thus is an affair of billions of people, and it is still a vague picture of the 21st century. But one thing that is certain is that the alliance of hope of billions should be preceded by an alliance of hope of tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands: an alliance based on inter-movement autonomy, an arena and network where people's movements from different concerns and backgrounds meet, recognize each other's peopleness, and enter into a dynamic process of interaction. Let us engage in this task.

# **Reforming North Economy, South Development, and World Economic Order**

*Martin Khor Kok Peng*

The nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) represented in the Third World Network have been spending most of their energies at the national and international levels fighting to conserve forests and other natural resources and fighting against the effects of toxic chemicals and wastes. We have been very actively communicating with agencies such as the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the European Economic Community, giving detailed critiques of the environmental and social effects of programs and specific projects they have been funding. We have also been active within our own Third World countries helping local communities protect their forest and land resources, and advocating policies with our own governments that would reduce resource depletions and would improve standards for food, environment, and occupational safety.

From the perspective of groups working at the community level, we realize that unless ecological issues are linked simultaneously with social issues of equity and economic issues of having sufficient income and financial resources, we will not solve the environmental problems at local, national, or international levels. For solutions at the local level, we also have to link up to national and international policies and structures. This is why many grassroots groups in the Third World are now allocating some of our resources to international networking, as we realize that local solutions require a conducive international environment.

## **Environment and Economic Crises Linked**

The global environment crisis is accompanied today by increasingly severe economic and social crises in most parts of the Third World. The per capita incomes in most African and Latin American (and some



Asian) countries fell during the 1980s, in some regions declining to the levels of 20 or 30 years ago. Poverty has increased, and health problems (like cholera epidemics in Latin America and Africa) have returned.

These two phenomena—the global environment crisis and the socioeconomic decline in the South—are interconnected and have resulted together from an inequitable world order, unsustainable systems of production and consumption in the North, and inappropriate development models in the South.

Among profit-centered economic institutions, the operating principle of competition has made economic growth a necessity. This principle operates within social systems that have a very unequal distribution of resources and incomes, thus resulting in uneven distribution of the benefits of growth and development. Much of the world's output and income are channeled to a small elite (mostly in the North but also in the South), while a large part of humanity (mostly in the South, but also a growing minority in the North) has insufficient means to satisfy its needs.

In addition to this uneven distribution, the high rate of growth has led to the rapid depletion and contamination of resources, pollution, proliferation of toxics, and climate change threats. This, then, is the social-ecological crisis of our times: the accelerating exhaustion and pollution of Earth's resources through inappropriate technology and production processes producing ever increasing volumes of goods and services, the majority of which are channeled to filling the luxury wants of an elite, while too few are going toward fulfilling the basic human needs of the poorer majority. And resources to meet the justifiable demands of future generations will be even scarcer.

From this perspective, the environmental and economic crises are the result of the same fundamental sources: the inappropriate and wasteful economic model of the North, the unequal distribution of resources and income at global and national levels, and the inappropriate development models in the South. The global link between the North's model and the South's model is obvious: the South's development model is only a subset or a subsidiary of the dominant Northern economic model.

The North's model was transferred to the South during colonialism (when the pattern of exchange between Southern raw materials and Northern capital and consumer products was established), and accelerated in the post-colonial period through multilateral institutions that advised on macroeconomic policy and facilitated the continuation of the North-South production and trade pattern.

The post-colonial development model promoted by the World Bank and adopted by most Third World countries called on the developing countries to expand their exports of commodities. This has led to higher volumes of production, oversupply, lower prices, and continuous fall in the terms of trade, with a disastrous growth in poverty. In environmental terms this has meant the acceleration in the depletion of natural resources such as oil, forests, minerals; the import of inappropriate Northern technologies that replaced the more ecologically sound systems of agriculture, fishery, animal husbandry, etc., that existed in the South; and the transfer to the South of polluting industries, unwanted and unsafe products, and toxic wastes. It can be seen that the environmental crisis is really a side-effect of international economic relations. It is the same economic and development model that created social problems like poverty, social inequities, and unbalanced development, as well as depletion and contamination of resources.

Given the pattern of world distribution of economic and technological power, the North, with 20% of world population, uses up 80% of world resources and has a per capita income on average 15 times higher than that of the South.

The major part of the problem of depletion and contamination of resources is thus located in the North. One could simplistically say that four-fifths of the problem lies in the Northern economic model and a fifth in the Southern development model.

At the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) there was a lot of focus on the South's flawed development model and the need to change to "sustainable development." Very little has been concretely discussed about the Northern economic model, which is after all the dominant model on which the South's development model is based. Very little has been planned about changing the North's economic model.

We often hear it said that it is true that the production and consumption patterns have to change, but that it is politically impossible to actually do it because no politician who advocates lifestyle change or diverting from economic growth would survive election. If this kind of "pragmatism" is to reign in the North, how then can we expect the much poorer South to be able to change its economies?

If a Northern politician is afraid to advise his or her public to have fewer cars per family, and to use less gas per car, can a Southern government be expected to tell the people to tighten their belts further to make way for two structural adjustments: the structural adjustment

forced on them by external debt and the new structural adjustment dictated by ecological imperatives?

## **Burden Sharing**

If we agree that we must reduce the depletion of resources and also spend more to lower the ecological costs of pollution, waste, and climate change, then it is inevitable that the volume of output has to go down. For instance, to save forests we have to reduce logging and cut down on wasteful use of wood. There is, then, the crucial question of sharing the burden of economically adjusting to an ecologically sound pattern of production and consumption. This was surely the heart of the issue at UNCED: international burden sharing, and burden sharing within nations.

At the international level, there are at least two ways by which adjustment could come about. The first is if the powerful countries were to say: "I'm strong, you are weak. I want your resources that are getting more scarce; give them to me; too bad if you don't agree." In this solution, there will be "triage," the strong throwing off the weak in order better to survive. The poor will be made to die off without help, sovereignty over resources will be eroded, and there will be a return in parts of the world to direct colonial rule.

The second way is for the governments of the world to agree on cooperation for the mutual survival of their peoples. The North would thus say: "We have a mutual problem. We belong together as part of humanity. The overriding principle is that we all survive together. I am strong but perhaps I was wrong. In the colonial past and now in this present system, we've taken away from Nature, and yet many of you are still as poor, if not poorer. And many of us frankly don't need so much to enjoy life. Maybe we could adjust this unequal relation and have a real partnership to save Nature and thus ourselves together."

The North's responsibility in this new partnership is or should be obvious. The era of colonialism saw military conquest, extraction of natural resources, and enormous flow of economic resources from the South. In the post-colonial period, the same phenomena have continued. Moreover, North-controlled multilateral institutions provided wrong advice or imposed inappropriate policies (such as increased commodity production or structural adjustment) which have resulted in social and ecological problems.

Sometimes, too, decisions made by a few major Northern countries (with no participatory rights from the South) resulted in enormous losses

for the South: for example, the realignment of exchange rates and interest rate increases caused many Southern countries' external debt stock and external debt servicing flows to jump. Finally, of course, it is predominantly the overconsumption of resources and the pollution emissions in the North that have caused the global environment crisis.

This does not mean that the South is absolved from all blame. As NGOs in the South, we spend a lot of our time pointing out the weaknesses and problems associated with the establishment and the elite. In many parts of the South, there is a combination of corruption, political patronage, financial mismanagement, and of course the adoption of inappropriate technologies and environmentally unsound policies.

We do, however, realize that even in these national-level problems, there are Northern-controlled institutions that play a role. For instance, while some political leaders are corrupt, it is the transnational corporations (TNCs) that offer the kickbacks; one should not blame the "lady of the night" without simultaneously putting the spotlight on the client. And, as pointed out earlier, much of the misallocation of resources in the South can also be traced to the wrong macroeconomic advice or conditionalities given by multilateral financial agencies and bilateral aid agencies.

We thus have to recognize that there are strong historical and intellectual grounds establishing the principle that the North should take measures to reverse the South-North transfer of resources and to provide not charity but a revival of moves to improve the South's terms of trade, to put life back into commodity pacts, to relieve the financial burdens weighing down the South, and to provide genuine aid for ecologically sustainable programs.

The North-South impasse is the major impediment to forward movement. We observe that Southern governments are reluctant to negotiate seriously on the technical areas such as biodiversity, forests, and climate, because the fundamental framework (namely, the social principles of sharing the burden of adjustment) has not yet been discussed or established.

## **National and International Democracy**

As national NGOs, we in the South have spent a lot of our energy in broadening the democratic spaces in our own national societies, in removing the barriers to people's participation, in helping social movements regain their right to land and other resources, and in promoting their right to good health and adequate nutrition, to safety, housing, and

a sustainable environment. All these things, as we know, are needed for both social justice and a sound environment and development policy.

At the same time, we now realize that the fight for democracy also has to be extended to the international arena where the lack of democracy is so obvious. International democracy is needed just as much as national democracy. Therefore, the UNCED process should also be an opportunity for us to expand the democratic spaces in the international institutions that shape world policy and, through that, the national policy of our countries.

The world economic order is obviously unbalanced, a fact so well-worn with analysis-without-remedial-action that few people are bold enough to even whisper the once popular catch phrase "the new international economic order" that the UN General Assembly adopted in a declaration in 1974. There cannot be concrete moves toward this new order unless the international economic institutions are democratized. And until there are moves toward a more balanced world economic order, there is little hope for any genuine partnership on the environment.

There must thus be a review of the performance of the major economic factors, including the transnational corporations, the international banks, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). These institutions, which make the decisions that affect so much of our lives, including the environment and development aspects, should be made much more accountable to the public. The decisionmaking processes in these institutions must be opened up for public participation and scrutiny.

Not only Southern governments but also local communities in our countries must have the opportunity to participate in the design of programs and the monitoring of effects. The public has the right because the public suffers the consequences if something goes wrong, whether it be the Bhopal residents dying from chemical poisoning, or the more than 100,000 farmers dying from pesticide poisoning annually, or the hundreds of millions of people suffering the social and economic effects of structural adjustment policies imposed by the World Bank and IMF.

## **Institutional Arrangements**

If the North has to reduce wasteful production and scale down wasteful consumption, what kinds of institutional arrangements can be established within and between Northern countries to make these changes possible? Within each Northern country, how can the necessary

adjustments be made to output levels and lifestyles, when we are told this kind of change is "politically impossible"? (If it is practically impossible to implement the changes that are needed to make it possible for us and Earth to survive, then surely we are doomed).

What institutional arrangements are needed in society to make the majority of people accept change? For instance, if the adjustment burden is equitably shared so that (for example) the incomes of the bottom 20% of households are increased to above poverty line, incomes of the top 10% are reduced (through tax or other mechanisms) by a large percentage, and incomes of the lower deciles are reduced but by progressively lower degrees, then it may be possible to get the majority to accept a scheme to change production and consumption patterns. Changing the volume and composition of output may be possible within a socially accepted framework, for the mutual survival of all. Thus, environmental concerns, economic changes, and social equity have to proceed hand in hand.

Institutional arrangements have also to be made among the countries of the North so that the respective countries would not feel that changes they make unilaterally for a sounder environment would give unfair commercial advantage to other countries. What role can be played by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development or by other Northern forums to plan for coordinated adjustment in the North as a whole and in individual North countries?

In the case of the South, what international institutional changes are required to promote the kind of economic environment that facilitates the transition to sustainable national development? What arrangements can be made to review and, if needed, revise the policies of technical agencies such as the FAO, the UN Development Program, and also private agencies to ensure that their programs conform to just and sustainable development? As for the Bretton Woods institutions, how can the World Bank, the IMF, and GATT be democratized, with fairer opportunities for Southern governments and NGOs/social movements to participate in decisionmaking, planning, evaluation, and revision of policies and programs? How can their processes be made more transparent and publicly accountable?

Since, in our analysis, these agencies have been responsible for a lot of the things that have gone wrong with the environment and development in the South, no more resources or power should be invested in these institutions unless and until they are democratized and have proven that they have the technical competence to deal with development and the environment. Otherwise, the logger would be

provided with a more powerful chainsaw, and we are sure that is not what we mean by good institutional arrangements.

There is also the need to establish a new or more comprehensive international trading institution under UN and democratic principles, whose objective would be the promotion of a more balanced North-South trade relationship, where the need for trade is tempered by the need of the South for stronger domestic economies simultaneously with a stronger position in world trade and economy. The role of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in giving a more favorable balance to the South should be promoted in this regard, but also should undergo prior assessment in the light of sustainable development imperatives. For instance, it is already outdated to promote the expansion of supply of (or even demand for) Third World raw materials, for this depletes natural resources.

The key issue in commodities (that combines environmental and economic concerns) is how to reduce the volume of production and exports (to conserve resources) while raising prices to reflect their social and ecological values, thus enabling the Third World exporting countries to retain their export earnings. The shortfall in volume can be made up for by price increases; thus, there would be North-South (or producer-consumer) cooperation in the sharing of the economic burden of adjusting to ecological principles. A reformed UNCTAD with more environmental expertise and more political teeth could play a role in combining economics and ecology in new trading arrangements.

We hope we have made the point that environmental and economic issues have to be resolved simultaneously, in a well-balanced manner, within the context of North-South relations, and with the operating principles of ecological sustainability and social equity. If there is a fairer North-South balance at the international level, it would make it far easier or possible for NGOs in the South to facilitate genuine people's participation in endeavors toward socially just and environmentally sound forms of development. At the same time, we are always reminded by the objective facts that the North has to change within itself, and that the battle for that adjustment in the North will also be as difficult as it is necessary.

# **The Transformations Must Be Deep and Global**

*Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva*

We are now nearly five-and-a-third-billion people on this Earth. Three people are born every second; three-hundred-thousand a day; a hundred-million a year; and in the present decade there will be more than a billion new human beings. About 90% of this population increase will take place in the poor countries of the southern half of the planet.

If we set these population trends alongside the present concentration of income in the world, the data are truly frightening. We see that the industrialized countries of the North enjoy a per capita income of nearly \$15,000 a year, and consume an average of 25 times more per person than the "developing" countries of the South.

Now that the popularity of Cold War militarism is at an end, we have entered a period characterized by great transformations and much political instability. The progress of new technologies, changes in the patterns of production and in the systems for its administration, the tendency toward the globalization of strategic sectors of the economy—all of these are producing a new context for the international structure of production, one which has as its basic characteristic the increasing widening of the gap between South and North.

The economy of the future is an economy of knowledge and know-how. The poor countries of the South are losing the comparative advantages of cheap labor and traditional raw materials. At the same time the configuration of the great economic blocs and their mega-markets are imposing new scales of production and very high levels of productivity with which the fragile economies of the South cannot compete. The concentration of income, wealth, and power is increasing at a rate seldom seen in history.

This extremely adverse context for the poor economies of the South is made even worse by the offensive of the neoliberal strategy

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This chapter is based on two speeches given in New York and Sao Paulo in 1992. Translations by David G. Sweet and Joe Weiss.



The maquiladora industry carries forward some fundamental characteristics of the "new order" imposed on the Latin American and Caribbean region by the unregulated internationalization of the economy: integration based on significant economic disparity, industrial growth achieved at the cost of sustainable development, and competitiveness built upon environmental degradation and the exploitation of young working women. Currently, free-market-oriented economies in the Western hemisphere lack social and institutional checks on corporate power; therefore, they represent not the promise of a new frontier, but rather a reenacted economic version of the Monroe Doctrine: the people and resources of the Americas for the U.S.-backed corporations.

As a broken line between the North and South, the Mexico-U.S. border signals the end of "national" identities and announces the birth of a new "country" whose rules and mores are still undefined, but whose workers are bound together by the reality of being citizens of the global economy. This "nation" without borders is one in which the encounter of capital and labor, production and environment, and ideologies and cultures presents unparalleled risks for a healthy future, but also unprecedented opportunities for social change.

## **Existential Uprootedness**

The fall of socialist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has been portrayed by political leaders in the West as the triumph of good over evil, and of freedom over oppression. Yet it is precisely in the world dominated by capitalism that we witness a dramatic gap between the haves and have-nots, and between access to wealth for the few and lack of opportunities for the many. More than half of the population living under capitalist systems have lost access to healthcare and adequate food, education, and housing. The net result of this travesty of values is that the cost of living is much higher than the price of human life.

For this reason, the condition of "landlessness" is not exclusive to refugees, undocumented immigrants, and maquiladora workers. The expulsion from opportunities for a dignified life is the reality imposed on most men and women who inhabit the world. In a violent perversion of priorities, to be a human being does not *per se* entitle anybody to the opportunity to live in dignity.

The uprooting of millions of poor and working people is more than economic; in fact, being "uprooted from the land" is an existential condition that now encompasses humanity. People's persistent yearning

for a plentiful life, in harmony with nature, is still unanswered. Thus, in an ontological sense, we all are immigrants forced to live in a world we have yet to understand, in a reality that feels alien to us. Social injustice and ecological decay are crude and cruel manifestations of the fruitless search for happiness through the accumulation of wealth and power by a few individuals, groups, and nations.

## **Beings without Barriers**

The Chicano-Mexicano slogan "we are a people without borders" was born as a response to the surge of the unregulated internationalization of capital and production; the slogan was also a call for identity and solidarity, for the right of being oneself and being with others beyond the limits imposed by the nation-state.

However, the new order cannot be defined only through the falling of political and economic walls. It will have to rise out of the dismantling of the multiple class, racial, gender, and cultural barriers that have so far impeded the building of a "common global village," of a community of individuals and groups bound by the recognition of their dignity, by the free exercise of their potential, and by the sharing of love among themselves and with their habitat.

The globalization of capital, production, and communications has created the conditions in which the peoples of the world can come together across borders and barriers. This opportunity represents more than a common effort in proposing alternatives to the global economy; it is rather an opportunity for the convergence of "world visions," cultural experiences, and long-held aspirations whose dynamics can lead to a profound reevaluation or revolution in our ways of thinking of and relating to ourselves and the universe around us.

The foundations of the "common global village" do not yet exist. In identifying them, we will have to acknowledge the multidimensional character and aspirations of our being. It won't be so much an intellectual task as it will be a challenge to our hope in achieving a liberation beyond politics and economics: freeing ourselves from the belief that the social illnesses or injustices we have encountered in the struggle for a meaningful life are congenital to our existence rather than simply a facet of our evolving nature and understanding.

In its most visionary translation, the Chicano-Mexicano slogan would have to say in face of the future: "we are beings without barriers." Indeed, beings at the doorstep of understanding both the secrets of life and the sacredness of all forms of existence and their unlimited potential.

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